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## FALSE START AT CONEY ISLAND

People's playground is smaller than ever

By Mike McLaughlin  
The Brooklyn Paper

The shrinking amusement area of Coney Island reopened on Sunday, but it's going to be weeks before Coney Island shows signs of life. Even as the Cyclone roller coaster made its first run, across the street, the site of the former Astroland theme park was empty. And nearby, sections of the Boardwalk remain ripped up for renovations — a fitting symbol for a strip where many of the bony-yank merchants and old-man bars

like Ruby's remain closed. Even Totino's, the legendary Neptune Avenue pizzeria, remains shuttered until its owners repair damage from a fire last month. The carnage has been exacerbated by the struggle between the city and the area's principal landowner Joe Sitt for control of the area's destiny. The city wants to create a new city-owned amusement park complemented by hotels, attractions and restaurants, but has been baggling. See **CONY** on page 10



HE'S OUTTA THERE: Borough President Markowitz was excited about a photo op at Sunday's reopening of the Cyclone roller coaster (left). But when the car started rolling down the track, the beep blanching (center). Fortunately, the train was halted to allow Markowitz to get out.



Hours before Passover began on Wednesday night, this youngster joined hundreds of Hasidic Jews for a "sun blessing" on Kent Avenue in Williamsburg.

## Here came the sun

By Ben Muessig  
The Brooklyn Paper

Jews across Brooklyn celebrated the beginning of Passover on Wednesday night, but earlier in the morning, thousands of Hasidic Jews gathered at Kent Avenue and Hooper Street

in Williamsburg to mark what they believe to be an historic occasion: the third time in history that the Passover holiday began at the same moment in a 26-year cycle that the sun was in the exact celestial position it occupied at the moment of Creation.

Whether you subscribe to that Biblical belief or not, one thing is true: the faithful had a party on Wednesday morning, singing, praying and dancing in the street after receiving a special "sun blessing" from Rabbi Shalom Kraus.

## She's boxed in

Cars on sidewalks getting in way

By Ben Muessig  
The Brooklyn Paper

Mutuals who park their cars on the sidewalks of Bay Ridge are driving at least one woman mad.

Wheelchair-user Jean Ryan says that the ever-increasing traffic jam of cars on the community's sidewalks have forced her to risk dangerous descents over curbs or even into traffic.

"We should not have to share any sidewalk with cars," said Ryan, who has started to photograph offending vehicles. "The sidewalk is for pedestrians only."

The problem of cars on sidewalks in Bay Ridge stems from a lack of parking in the neighborhood.

And sidewalk parking has only gotten worse in recent months, according to Josephine Beckmann, the district manager of Bay Ridge's Community Board 10.

"We've gotten a lot of complaints about sidewalk parking — mostly notably about establishments like car dealerships and car washes — but



Jean Ryan can't get around her neighborhood because of all the illegally parked cars.

also about other locations," said Beckmann, whose board is in the process of drafting "terse" letters to offending businesses, as well as a request for increased enforcement from police. "I understand that there is not a lot of parking and certain businesses have spacing issues, but it's very clear that cars should not be on the sidewalk."

The board pinpointed a number of sidewalk parking hotspots that cause a "quality-of-life issue particularly for senior citizens and people with disabilities," including several sites along Fourth Avenue in the 80s and 90s and at Xaverian HS.

But Xaverian Dean of Students Michael Wilson claims

See **BOXED** on page 11



## Byrne baby, Byrne

By Ben Muessig  
The Brooklyn Paper

Leave it to head Talking Head David Byrne to get people talking.

The acclaimed songsmith — whose seminal 1980s band merged experimental music with pure pop — will kick off the summer's "Celebrate Brooklyn" concert series with a June 8 performance in the Prospect Park band shell.

Deep-pocketed lovers of the crooner who sang "Psycho Killer" can shell out \$35 or more for reserved seats and tickets to a pre-show gala that benefits the concert series, while less well-heeled music lovers can enjoy the "Once in a Lifetime" concert for free — though there is a \$5 suggested donation.

"It's fabulous that David Byrne will be headlining," said Tupper Thomas, president of the Prospect Park Alliance, who claimed that the rocker's benefit performance "complements the artistry of

See **BYRNE** on page 11



A rezoning of part of DUMBO would prevent towers like the J Condo, but would allow buildings that are still too tall for some residents.

## It's DUMBO! Not JUMBO!

Locals: City not doing enough to save historic neighborhood

By Mike McLaughlin  
The Brooklyn Paper

A city plan to encourage residential development in parts of DUMBO was narrowly rejected by the neighborhood's community board on Tuesday night.

By a 13-10 vote, Community Board 2 defeated a city rezoning that would allow old warehouses within a 12-block area manufacturing zone east of the Manhattan Bridge to be converted to residential apartments.

The proposal would limit new building heights to about 12 stories, but opponents said that even that height was too tall — and the board agreed.

The vote follows a split rejection by CB2's Land Use Committee

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on March 18. That decision reflected substantial concern from residents, some of them members of the DUMBO Neighborhood Association, who said the Department of City Planning's vision would overwhelm the enclave with bulky buildings.

"The proposed rezoning will create out-of-scale development in this part of DUMBO," said Gus Sheha, vice president of the DNA.

The 12-story limit is significantly shorter than other recent additions to the hip, artsy district, such as the 31-floor, glassy J Condo at the corner of Jay and Front streets, and the 18-story Beacon Tower on York between Adams and Jay streets.

But there are several vacant lots and existing low-rise buildings that would be ripe for new development if the proposal becomes reality.

The board also noted another main complaint against the city's plan, namely that a residential rezoning could expel artists from dual live-work studios, which are permitted on manufacturing parcels.

"[Rezoning] would push live-work spaces and the small manufacturing business out of the neighborhood," Sheha said.

Other opponents said they were frustrated by a secretive process. For example, the city's environmental impact statement for the rezoning claims that there's sufficient capacity at area middle schools to handle an influx

of students after the rezoning — yet the environmental impact statement prepared at about the same time for a controversial plan by Two Trees Management to build an 18-story building on nearby Dock Street claimed there was a shortage of middle school seats in the neighborhood.

The same firm wrote both studies.

Concerns aside, the neighborhood's business group, the DUMBO Improvement District, said it supports the city's plan because it would foster development and growth. "It's such a positive for DUMBO because it will add ... more families and businesses," Executive Director Kate Kerrigan said last month. "That will add more foot traffic — and that's good for our local businesses."

## He's Rookie of the Year!

Mike McLaughlin wins freshman honors



Brooklyn Paper reporter Mike McLaughlin is congratulated by his idol, Editor Gersh Kuntzman, after winning a statewide award.

The Brooklyn Paper

Readers of The Brooklyn Paper have known it for years, but now it's official: Mike McLaughlin is the best young journalist in the state of New York.

That judgment was rendered last Saturday in Saratoga Springs by the New York Press Association, a statewide trade association that represents hundreds of daily and weekly newspapers, big and small.

In tight competition, the judges cited McLaughlin, 30, for an "engaging writing style," and stories that are "well-organized, informative — a treat to read."

They also responded to McLaughlin's "broad range of stories," including hard news; his scoops on Coney Island and other development topics; his bright features; and even "Mike McLaughlin's The Search," his ongoing series about finding love in the Big City of Brooklyn.

Readers of The Brooklyn Paper have also come to admire McLaughlin in his newest role, as the "Butcher of Flatbush Avenue Extension," our theater critic.

"I feel great!" McLaughlin said after hearing the news from Publisher Emer-

See **ROOKIE WINS** on page 9



A team of independent engineers think they have a way to mitigate noise from the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway that would ruin the calm at the proposed Brooklyn Bridge Park.

## Dreaming of a B-Quiet-E

By Ben Muessig  
The Brooklyn Paper

Here's another way to muffle the noisy Brooklyn-Queens Expressway, as it roars past the proposed Brooklyn Bridge Park development — instead of 30-foot mini-mountains, a Brooklyn Heights architect

proposes a solar-panel-covered envelope to encase the highway.

The proposal calls for wrapping the BQE's triple cantilever in translucent acrylic shells to suppress roadways sounds, allowing the buildings of the open space component of the ailing waterfront development

to eliminate the planned sound-reflecting hills.

"This will be much more effective than berms," said architect Donald Rattner of the Studio for Civil Architecture, which is pushing for the so-called "Brooklyn Bridge Corridor."

See **DREAM** on page 12

## BROOKLYN POLITICS

# 'Hammer' drops in Council race

By Mike McLaughlin  
The Brooklyn Paper

Community Board 6 District Manager — and New York City Hall of Fame inductee — Craig Hammerman has abandoned his second quest to represent Park Slope in the City Council.

The longtime community fixer told The Brooklyn Paper Tuesday that he was leaving the now-five-man race to succeed Councilman Bill DeBlasio "for personal reasons."

"It's for personal reasons," Hammerman said. "My family needs me right now."

He promised to issue a formal statement in the next few days.

Hammerman said his personal affairs would not require him to take a leave from his job at CB6.

"I'll continue to do my best for the best community board in the city," he said.

Personal reasons aside, the road to City Hall would not be a smooth one for the popular Hammerman, who had not reported any fundraising, while his main rivals Brad Lander, Josh Skaller and Bob

Zuckerman raced to the front of the money race.

Lander has raised \$108,000, while Skaller has generated \$79,418 worth of monetary enthusiasm and Zuckerman is at \$51,250.

Other candidates, Gary Reilly and John Heyer, have also raised tens of thousands of dollars.

And unlike the other candidates, Hammerman had not garnered any of the early endorsements from elected officials and labor unions in the race to represent the Columbia Waterfront District to Park Slope to Kensington.

The decision to quit the race was



He's out: Craig Hammerman.

a sad one for Hammerman, who finished last in the 2001 primary. At that time, he jokingly blamed his loss on the fact that he hired his mother to be his campaign manager.

The current field to replace DeBlasio had already narrowed when former Councilman Steve DiBrenza quit his Grover Cleveland-like quest to return to elected office after The Brooklyn Paper reported that a non-profit group controlled by the former councilman had received close to \$1.2 million in taxpayer money since 2002 — the vast majority of it spent on salaries to DiBrenza and other staffers.

## THE SMOKE-FILLED ROOM

# Ridge Rep. votes yes on budget

By Gersh Kuntzman  
The Brooklyn Paper

Rep. Mike McMahon made the biggest vote of his life last Thursday night — so, naturally, he was on the phone with The Brooklyn Paper the next morning.

That April 2 vote — on the president's \$3.5-trillion budget — was a doozy, a bill both massive in size and controversy (not a single Republican voted for it).

"I was a little nervous as I cast my vote," said McMahon, who was literally on Line 1 to our Metrotech offices from somewhere inside his Bay Ridge–Staten Island district.

"It's a big bill, so it's nerve-wracking," he said. "But it's a fiscally prudent plan that will take on some of the big challenges: health care costs, education, energy."

McMahon said he cast the vote at 7:30 p.m. — just too late to make the last fast Amtrak out of Washington. Instead, he caught the 9 p.m. local — and crawled all the way up the Eastern Seaboard (good thing he's on the Transportation Committee).

The budget vote will earn McMahon some criticism in his centrist district, but he said he welcomes the chance to explain his rationale.

"It's not a perfect budget because it does not reduce the debt as quickly as I'd like," he said. "But it is responsible. It does have tax breaks for the middle class



and it does provide a roadmap on health care, education and energy. It also has an increase in benefits for veterans."

But it has a huge deficit — extending more than a decade into the future.

I am as concerned as everyone about deficits," he said. "But remember, when the Bush administration took over, it had a surplus. This year, we were left with a \$1-trillion budget deficit and a national debt of \$10 trillion. President Obama's budget will cut the annual deficit in half and reduce the national debt by one-third over five years. It's not as quick as I'd like it, but given the tough times we're in, this is the most sensible budget that the country has had in eight years."

But if times are so tough, why should the nation take on so much, the congressman was asked.

"We can't stabilize the economy without dealing with big-cost items like health care," he said. "Every small businessman knows that this is the biggest problem. Yes, we must get deficits down, but this is like in the 1930s and '40s, when we needed to take bold action and we did."

# Tish squared

Councilwoman finally pays her back property taxes

By Mike McLaughlin  
The Brooklyn Paper

Councilwoman Letitia James moved quickly this week to diffuse what could have been a major distraction in her re-election campaign, personally heading to a Department of Finance office in Manhattan to pay \$9,000 in overdue property taxes on her Lafayette Avenue house.

The April 7 payment still leaves a balance of \$837.46, according to city records.

James had initially told The Brooklyn Paper that she hasn't paid the year-old bills because she was waiting for her IRS refund check, but later decided that media coverage of her debt to society, first reported by our sister publication, Courier Life, had become "a distraction."

"It's my responsibility," she said on Thursday, adding that she never saw the late payments as a scandal. "I'm not removed from the tough times in this economy," said James, who makes \$12,500 as the people's representative for Fort Greene and Clinton Hill. "I'm not unique as a New Yorker."

When asked how the information came to light in the first place, James suggested that someone leaked it to a reporter.

"It came from the millionaires and the billionaires I've challenged over the years," she said, a reference to her opposition to the Atlantic Yards project and to its developer Bruce Ratner, who has funded

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April 1, 2009: \$2,153.59  
April 7, 2009: (\$9,000)

REMAINING BALANCE: \$837.46

a non-profit run by Delia Humley-Adossa, James' main opponent for the Democratic nomination in September. James had taken a swipe at Humley-Adossa over that non-profit as the property tax scandal unfolded last week.

If I started a not-for-profit, I could take money from [Mayor] Bloomberg and Ratner to pay [my property taxes]," she quipped at the time.

James isn't alone in paying late, though she owes significantly more than other public figures.

In the wake of the James mini-scandal, The Brooklyn Paper conducted an exhaustive search of city records and discovered that Councilwoman Darlene Mealy (D-Williamsburg) owes \$842 since October, 2008, on her Herkimer Street residence.

One of Brooklyn's literary elite has an overdue bill, too. Jonathan Safran Foer — well known to Brooklyn Paper readers as the greatest writer of his generation — owes the Finance Department \$10.5 on his Park Slope house, most likely not enough to trigger any punishment from city officials.

Last May, James ran into deeper trouble when her campaign was fined \$5,000 by the Campaign Finance Board for overpaying a staff worker with taxpayer money provided through the city's public campaign financing.

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# THE STATION

NEIGHBORHOOD REPORT

## BROOKLYN HEIGHTS

# Sign up or sign out?

Armando's is back, but what about the lobster?

By Mike McLaughlin  
The Brooklyn Paper

Brooklyn Heights is gearing up for the return of the popular restaurant Armando's, but the soon-to-be-reopened Italian joint might not be able to hang its famous — some say infamous — neon lobster sign in the landmark district.

The restaurant's owner, Peter Byrnes, would like the iconic light to again glow outside his restaurant as it did for decades before he closed the classic eatery in 2008. But the city Landmark Preservation Commission must first rule if the sign is an appropriate addition — make that re-addition — to the streetscape of historic Montague Street.

The shining light was installed more than 70 years ago, when Armando's opened in what was then not a historic district. When the area was protected with historic status in 1965, the garish neon sign was grandfathered in.

But when Byrnes removed it



Will this beloved Montague Street sign return when the restaurant does? It's unclear!

to make way for the now-closed Spicy Pickle sandwich chain, the sign lost its protected status. Now, he's applied for permission to fix it anew above his bistro, which was 72 years old when it closed.

"I have the sign in storage, all cleaned up," said a hopeful Byrnes, who added that he's "working with city."

The potential disappearance of the signage briefly inspired an ultimately unsuccessful

online drive led by Brooklyn Heights Blog writer Homer Fink to win a special landmark designation for the sign itself.

"It's a beautiful sign and it lights up the whole block," Fink said last March. "It's been here for many decades, so I thought, 'Why not try to save something as iconic as the lobster?'"

But some locals say it's more of an eyesore than a

bright spot.

"It may need to be smaller and it may need to be modernized," said Judy Stanton, executive director of the Brooklyn Heights Association. "It was sort of a wonderful piece of memorabilia. It spoke of a different era."

A different era, certainly, but not the late 18th/early 1900s style that the Landmarks Preservation Commission protects when it made Brooklyn Heights the city's first historic district.

The city has not yet scheduled a hearing for Armando's, but it has received an application from Byrnes to be considered. Community Board 2 will also provide an advisory opinion on the restaurant's application.

With or without the prominent sign, Byrnes is enthusiastic about regaining the Heights dining scene. "The restaurant is going to be the same, but a little better," he told The Brooklyn Paper.

## BAY RIDGE

# The big queasy

Man howling over lost storm coverage

By Ben Muessegger  
The Brooklyn Paper

Bay Ridge resident Robert Newmark says his neighborhood is nothing like New Orleans — except that he can't get homeowners' insurance, just like the people in that hurricane-torn city.

Angry about being cancelled by Allstate, which is concerned about possible storm damage in Bay Ridge, the retired schoolteacher stormed a Community Board 10 meeting last month to sound the alarm that major insurance providers are still mixing home insurance policies.

Newmark, who lives on Perry Terrace, says his quiet street is about as far from the Big Easy as you can get — and is certainly not at risk of a storm like Hurricane Katrina, which caused more than \$100 billion in damages and left major insurance companies struggling.

"We are way above the water — why should we be lumped with places like the Rockaways and New Orleans?" he asked.



Robert Newmark, a Bay Ridge homeowner, says Allstate cancelled his policy unfairly.

Newmark — who never filed a claim after the 2007 tornado ripped shingles from his roof — told The Brooklyn Paper that Allstate decided not to renew his \$900 annual policy last year because of his proximity to the

Narrows. A spokeswoman from Allstate declined to comment on the specifics of Newmark's case.

"Every policy is different, and the best advice we can give to any policy holder is

for him to speak directly to his agent," said Jaclyn Darrohn.

Stephen Leatherman, director of the International Hurricane Research Center, said that the city hasn't suffered a direct hit since the 1890s, and that there is a "low probability" of such a storm striking Bay Ridge.

But insurance experts say that wind is the problem, not flooding.

Standard homeowners' insurance does not cover floods — but it often covers wind damage, so no-renewals issued to Bay Ridge residents who live within about 1,000 feet of the Narrows are likely due to the risk of hurricane winds, according to Michael Barry, a spokesman for the Insurance Information Institute.

"There is a whole generation that has no real memory of a hurricane hitting this area, so it's only natural that some people are surprised that this is a concern of the insurance industry," he said.

But whether insurers cite wind or water, Newmark claims that they're full of hot air.

"Wind is only going to knock a couple of shingles off the roof in Bay Ridge," he said. "They don't want to pay out and they'll find any excuse not to."

## FORT GREENE

# Tougher than Harvard!

By Gersh Kuntzman  
The Brooklyn Paper

Compared to the competition for a kindergarten slot, Harvard will be a safety school for these kids.

At a lottery on Tuesday night, more than 400 students sought just 37 kindergarten slots at Fort Greene's Community Roots Charter School — an acceptance rate far steeper than America's top universities.

"It's an indication that times are tough and people are looking for a good public school for their kids," said Fredrick Anderson, who has children in kindergarten and second grade at the school, which occupies the third floor of PS 67 on St. Edwards Street.

It's also an indication of continuing discontent with PS 20, on nearby Adelphi Street, and its principal, Sean Keaton.

"The principal is a disaster," said

one poster on insideschools.org, a non-partisan guide to New York City public schools. "He is authoritarian, defensive, and almost incapable of taking input seriously. He has been hostile and even abusive to some parents, sent angry e-mails to parents who dared challenge

his authority, and... has pitted parents against each other."

Some parents have defended Keaton, but statistics show that he is having trouble attracting students from within the school's catchment area. Only 27 percent of the kindergarten-age students who live in the school's zone attend. And next year, the school will have only two kindergarten classes, down from three this year.

"He's losing students," said one Community Roots parent who did not want to be identified.

A spokesperson for the Department of Education did not return a call and Keaton could not be reached before the Passover holiday.

Meanwhile, the charter school is surging. This year's 410 applicants for 37 slots next year is up from 299 last year. That 83 percent acceptance rate beats Harvard (92), Princeton (97) and Yale (99).

## WILLIAMSBURG

# Walk on the mild side

Bedford to close for summer Saturdays

By Ben Muessegger  
The Brooklyn Paper

Williamsburg might be short on parkland, but on summer Saturdays, the neighborhood is poised to again boast seven additional blocks of open space.

Bedford Avenue is expected to go car-free every Saturday in June and July for the second annual "Williamsburg Walks," which turns the thoroughfare into a pedestrian-only plaza between Metropolitan Avenue and North Ninth Street.

Cars will still be able to cross Bedford Avenue on all the side streets, but each block of Bedford itself will be free from traffic and parked cars between noon and sunset.

And unlike the summertime street fairs, "Williamsburg Walks" won't clog

the pedestrian-only zone with vendors, said organizer Michael Freedman-Schnapp, whose group Neighbors Allied for Good Growth is planning the Saturday strolls with the L Magazine.

This is not going to be tube-sock-and-gym-kind-of street fair. This is going to be civic space that the community can enjoy," said Freedman-Schnapp, who urged Williamsburgers to take advantage of the open space by hosting barbecues on their strip of the borough's longest road.

Organizers said they still need to get their permits from the city, and work out how to route the 861 bus around Bedford Avenue.

After the success of last year's "Williamsburg Walks," many merchants told

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# Sidney a bad 'Place' to be

## 84TH PRECINCT

**Brooklyn Heights-DUMBO**  
Broom Hills-Downtown

Three youths mugged a 38-year-old on Sidney Place near Jerusalem Street on April 4.

The three suspects bumped into the victim as he walked by them at 6:30 p.m., then surrounded and threatened the

man, ordering him to give up his property, cops said.

The thieves ran off with the victim's iPhone, iPod and \$15, cops told.

## Sinful steal

Talk about a shonda! With Passover just days away, a leader of the Brooklyn Heights Synagogue called police to report that someone had swiped them out of \$31,200.

Cops were told that a synagogue administrator at the Remsen Street house of worship had checked the congregation's bank account online and discovered that it was a lot lighter than expected.

Members of the congregation questioned the disparity and found that someone had cashed a forged check for the missing amount.

**Tea time**  
A pair of classy thugs is being sought for robbing a DUMBO deliveryman after — of course — their morning tea.

Police said the victim was in the process of dropping off a food order at a store near the corner of Washington and Front streets at around 5:10 a.m. on March 31 when he was given a large bill as payment.

Needing change, the victim walked into the Penn and Parkes all-night grocery store and waited on line behind two men ordering tea before he could trade it in for smaller bills.

He got the money and exited the store, only to be confronted by the two "tea-totalers, who put him in a headlock and jammed a gun in his side until he handed the cash over.

## Victimless crime

A patrolman jumped into action on April 5 when he saw a cellphone thief being chased by his victim near the corner of Schermerhorn and Livingston streets.

The frantic chase began at around 12:15 p.m. when the cop saw a panicked woman hot on her mugger's heels. The officer joined the chase, pushed the woman, and apprehended the sticky-fingered thief at the corner of Hoyt and State streets.

But when he brought the thief back to the scene of the crime, the victim was nowhere to be found. The thief had dropped the phone during the chase, and the victim

## POLICE BLOTTER

Find more online every Wednesday at  
**BrooklynPaper.com/blotter**

had seen it on the ground. Apparently, she had picked it up and continued on her way.

## Water bandits

Thieves ransacked a DUMBO apartment, taking over \$3,600 in electronics on April 2.

The 46-year-old Water Street resident said that someone broke into his apartment, which is near Main Street, after 10 a.m., and helped himself to a laptop computer, a cell phone, and two digital cameras.

## 2nd time charm

The thief — possibly the same man who mugged a car swipe from a Cadman Plaza West parking garage in mid-March — may have finally struck gold on March 29.

Officials said that someone sneaked into a parking garage on Cadman Plaza West near Middagh Street sometime between 3:30 and 11 a.m. on March 29 and snatched an unlocked \$53,000 Range Rover owned by a Willow Street resident.

The thief reportedly drove through the garage's security gate as he made his escape, officials said.

The crime is shocking similar to a failed attempt 10 days earlier, though that attempt failed. — **Tom Tracy**

## 88TH PRECINCT

**Fort Greene-Clinton Hill**

## Subway gunman

A sandwich maker risked life and limb in failed attempt to prevent a gunman from robbing a Subway shop on Flatbush Avenue on April 7.

At 8:15 a.m., a bandit burst into the store near the corner of Fulton Street and pointed a gun directly at the clerk, 41. The armed man went behind the counter and demanded the employee open the register. But when the worker refused, the hoodlum shoved him out of the way and stole about \$300 from the till and another \$400 from a cash box beneath the counter.

The daring worker then tried to restrain the robber and prevent him from fleeing.

to 10:30 p.m. When he returned, he found his front door damaged and discovered that someone had stolen his computer, video camera and digital camera.

## 78TH PRECINCT

**Park Slope**

## Apple bobbing

It must be the Great Depression — but this time, people aren't selling apples on the street, they're stealing them from people's homes!

Here's a roundup of the quartet of laptops thieves last week:

## 94TH PRECINCT

**Greenpoint-Williamsburg**

## Bad fare

A tipsy taxi rider tried to hurl a cabbage out of his ride — while it was still moving on March 28.

The villain was drunk when she entered the cab at around 5:30 a.m., promptly declared, "I can drive myself home," climbed from the backseat and attempted to shove the driver out of the car, police reports indicated.

The cabbage pulled over on North Third Street between Wythe Avenue and Berry Street and exited his car with his keys in hand in order "to prevent further abuse from the perp," according to cops.

Police arrived and arrested a 44-year-old suspect.

## Suckerkicked!

Two vicious muggers brutally kicked an India Street man as he tried to enter his home on April 1.

The perp threw the victim to the sidewalk as he attempted to open his front door after enjoying drinks with friends at around 9:20 p.m.

Once on the ground, one of the arrests held the victim's arms behind his back while the other perp kicked him in the face and the body.

The thieves grabbed the victim's wallet — which contained \$150 — and fled from the scene, which was between Franklin Street and Greenpoint Avenue. The attack left the victim bruised, "bleeding heavily," and unable to see from his right eye, according to police reports.

## Computer love

Two men conspired to steal not Apples this time — were swiped from a President Street apartment on March 31.

The victim told cops that she had left her place, which is between Eighth Avenue and Prospect Park West, at noon and returned 12 hours later to find her front door open and the Dell and Fujitsu computers, plus \$30, gone.

## Car-pe diem

At least five cars were stolen last week:

- A quick crook stole a 1989 Toyota Corolla from its Sackett Street parking spot on March 31. The victim had left her car at 6 p.m. and returned to find it gone about 18 hours later.
- A bandit stole a 2008 Toyota Yaris from 10th Street overnight on March 31. The victim parked her car and went to her house, on the corner of Third Avenue. When she checked the next morning at 8 a.m., the car was gone.
- A 2001 Subaru Outback was stolen from a spot on Fourth Avenue, between Sackett and Degraw streets, sometime after 7:30 p.m. on March 31 — a crime that was discovered about two days later.
- A thief took a 1999 Ford Ranger from Prospect Place between Fifth and Sixth avenues on March 28. The victim told cops that he had left it there at 9 p.m. and came back 90 minutes later to find it gone.

## Home burglar

An intruder broke into a South Oxford Street apartment on April 4 and pilfered some high-tech gadgets.

The resident, a 46-year-old man, told police that he was not in his home, which is between DeKalb and Lafayette avenues, from 6:30 p.m.

the home, which is between Smith and Court streets, from 8 a.m. until 3:44 p.m.

## Gem burns

Burglars nabbed many pieces of jewelry from a woman's apartment near the corner of Court and President streets on March 23.

The woman, 37, said the missing bangles included an antique engagement ring, several necklaces and earrings, as well as a digital camera. The police report did not reveal when the crime occurred.

## 20TH PRECINCT

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The cabbage pulled over on North Third Street between Wythe Avenue and Berry Street and exited his car with his keys in hand in order "to prevent further abuse from the perp," according to cops.

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The thieves grabbed the victim's wallet — which contained \$150 — and fled from the scene, which was between Franklin Street and Greenpoint Avenue. The attack left the victim bruised, "bleeding heavily," and unable to see from his right eye, according to police reports.

## Warrior warriors

Muggers used cars as getaway vehicles at least three times last week. Here are the horrifying details:

- An armed thug jumped out of a white Ford Focus at the corner of North Eighth and Berry streets at around 11:15 p.m. on April 1 and pulled a handgun on a 26-year-old.
- "Hurry up, I need your wallet and cellphone," the crook ordered.
- The victim complied and the mugger drove off in the hatchback.
- Just 10 minutes later, a robber in a white vehicle stuck up a 29-year-old for his bag.
- The crook hopped out of his car at the corner of Skillman Avenue and Lorimer Street and yanked the victim's Kenneth Cole from his shoulder.
- When the victim tried to recover his bag — which contained credit cards — the thief threatened, "What? You want to get shot?"
- A mugger in a car snatched a 28-year-old woman's purse on April 5.
- The perp made his move at around 4:55 a.m. at the corner of Skillman Avenue and Leonard Street and grabbed the victim's bag — which contained cash, a cellphone, and a camera.

## Purse jackings

Thieves played tag-of-war against two North Brooklyn women for their purses on March 30 — and unfortunately the crooks won both matches.

- A villain yanked a woman's bag from her arm at the corner of North Seventh Street and Driggs Avenue, getting away with her ATM card, debit card, cash, make-up and keys at around 1:15 a.m.
- Eight hours later, a ruffian made off with a 42-year-old's bag at Freeman Street and Manhattan Avenue.
- The crook got her credit cards, debit cards, cellphone, and an ID.

## Ransacked!

A brutish burglar burst into two apartments on the same floor of a North Sixth Street building on April 1.

The beastly bad guy smashed the front doors of both apartments between 7:00 a.m. and 4 p.m., and made off with an Apple laptop and keyboard from a 32-year-old man's residence, and an iPod, Apple laptop, television, and jewelry from a 26-year-old woman's unit.

On the day of the break-ins, neighbors spotted a stranger lurking inside the building, which is between Driggs Avenue and Rosbling Street.

## Cash back?

Crooks jacked ATM from the stoop of a Meeker Avenue See **BLOTTER** on page 13

**Holy Week at Plymouth**

Rev. David C. Fisher, Senior Minister  
Bruce Oelschlager, Minister of Music

Friday, April 10 7:00 p.m. **Good Friday Tenebrae Service**

Sunday, April 12 11:00 a.m. **Easter Worship Service**

Rev. David C. Fisher, preaching.  
The Plymouth Choir, under the direction of Bruce Oelschlager, sings selections from Bach's B Minor Mass featuring the "Et Resurrexit," and "This Joyful Easterday" arranged by William Harris. Hymns and service music will also be accompanied by a brass quartet.  
Traditional Easter Egg Hunt follows.

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The Brooklyn Paper's essential guide to the Borough of Kings

April 11, 2009



# Hot dog!

Coney Island is still open for business

By Mike McLaughlin  
The Brooklyn Paper

Coney Island had its allegedly grand opening on Sunday, but the signs of desolation were everywhere — from the vacant former Astroland site to the empty lots near Keyspan Park. It's obvious that the area, which has always been a place of freaks, geeks, wonders of human curiosity, spills, chills, thrills and vaudeville, is not going to change. But its scale has.

The area's central attraction — the beach — will still be there, but even longtime visitors are wondering what else will be waiting when they get off the subway at Stillwell Avenue?

And, more important, will it be fun? There's nothing less enticing than an empty amusement area, so the key to a fun summer for the remaining businesses will be a steady stream of customers. And that's where the bad economy is good.

George Shea, the chairman of Major League Eating, which runs the annual July 4 hot dog-eating contest at Nathan's Famous, predicts that the economic pinch will have New Yorkers looking for more affordable and less expensive beach trips rather than going to the Hamptons or the Jersey Shore.

"The phenomenon this year is the much-talked-about staycation. Fewer people are going away," Shea said. "More people are going to go to New York beaches. ... In some ways, the economy is our ace in the hole."

Here's GO Brooklyn's guide to playing the cards this summer at the "People's Playground."

## They're back

Astroland bit the dust last fall, and even if there's only one true amusement park left — Deno's Wonder Wheel — there's a smattering of other attractions sprinkled around the area to titillate the visiting hordes.

"Coney Island has sort of a permanent infrastructure," said Shea. Sure, the closing of Astroland and, before that, the go-carts and batting cages on Stillwell Avenue sucked some of the life out of Coney Island, but they weren't knockout blows, Shea insisted.



1. Totonno's Pizzeria (1524 Neptune Ave., between West 15th and West 16th streets, (718) 269-1062), closed for repairs.
2. Brooklyn Cyclones at Keyspan Park (1904 Surf Ave., at the corner of 17th St., (718) 229-8497).
3. Dreamland Roller Rink (3022 West 21st St., (800) 362-5116), opening May 23.
4. Garguilo's Restaurant (2911 West 15th St., between Stillwell and Mermad avenues, (718) 264-4891).
5. Nathan's Famous (1310 Surf Ave., at Stillwell Avenue, (718) 946-2202).
6. Lola Starr boutique, Stillwell Avenue subway station (corner of Stillwell and Surf avenues, (718) 853-8773), opening May 23.
7. El Dorado Bumper Cars (1216 Surf Ave., between Stillwell Avenue and West 12th Street, (718) 372-5191).
8. Ruby's Old Time Bar (Boardwalk between Stillwell Avenue and West 12th Street, (718) 372-9079), also in the same block are Chai's and the Shoot the Freak booth.
9. "Dreamland Park" (former Astroland site, enter on Surf Avenue between West 10th and West 12th streets, (212) 529-5225).
10. Deno's Wonder Wheel Park (3029 West 12th St., (718) 372-2292).
11. The Cyclone (834 Surf Ave. between West Eighth and West 10th Streets, (718) 265-2100), free, weekends only until May 23, opens at noon.
12. New York Aquarium (Surf Avenue at West Eighth St., (718) 265-3474).

"Coney Island is going to attract an enormous number of people regardless of what's open," Shea said. "The pattern [of going to Coney Island] is ingrained in people's minds."

So here's what you'll find:  
• Deno's, the Boardwalk mainstay, opened on Sunday and will remain open every weekend through Memorial Day, when things kick into full gear. As always, there will be Friday night fireworks in the summer.

Island dreams: Astroland (above) is shuttered, but (top, from left) the Cyclone, Nathan's and the New York Aquarium live on.

spectators. This year, Joey "Jaws" Chestnut will defend his championship against documented cheater Takeru Kobayashi.  
• The Shoot the Freak booth, Chai's bar and the Dreamland roller rink, plus other Boardwalk carries, have renegotiated their leases with the locally reviled landlord Thor Equities, so they will be back where they belong. One exception: the Lola Starr boutique has moved from the Boardwalk to a tiny space in the Stillwell Avenue subway station. It's sort of like Siberia — except with lots of foot traffic.

• Get your freak on at the popular Coney Island Circus Sideshow by the Seashore. Chainsaw juggling, snake charming and sword swallowing are par for the course.  
• Batter's up. The Brooklyn Cyclones get ready to wallop their minor league competition starting with the home opener on June 19 against their bitter cross-Narrows rivals, the Staten Island Yankees.

• The New York Aquarium survived a scare worse than scary in this year's state budget process, so for now, the decades-old fishhouse will remain open seven days a week. This summer, the big weekend will be the June 13-14 birthday bash for Tausag, the beloved offspring of the famous (and dead) masticating walrus, Ayeq, who is not forgotten.

See CONEY on page 7

## ART

### Celling sex

Your racy cellphone photos, sultry mobile videos, and salacious text messages aren't just 21st-century smut — they're also high art. The Bushwick art space 3rd Ward is helping to highlight how wireless technology has revolutionized our sex lives (or could) with an exhibit of sexy images, videos, and messages that were created on, sent with or watched on a cellphone.

"The cellphone has transformed from something we use for phone calls to something we use for flirting, and picking people up," said Nikki Bagli, who is helping to orchestrate the "Sex Cells" show. "We know everyone's doing it — so we decided to show people how to do it right."

Contributors don't have to expose their names — but exposing their bodies might help: early submissions include an image of a cat posed beside a woman's vagina and a photo of a man's crotch titled, gratuitously, "The Bulge."

Another "piece," clearly for the fans of the high brow stuff, features one of the dirtiest text messages since Detroit Mayor Kwame Kilpatrick got arrested for them.

To enter, visit [www.3rdward.com/sexcells](http://www.3rdward.com/sexcells). Show opens on June 12. — Ben Muessig

## BEAUTY

### Green clean

It's finally time to clean up the dirty business of looking beautiful.

That's the goal of Wink, a new "green" salon on Vanderbilt Avenue in Prospect Heights, which opened on Tuesday, the brainchild of owner Tami Chambers, who said her main goal was to live a more eco-conscious life.

"I became conscious of what I ate and used in my home," said Chambers. "That's when I found out about the toxicity of beauty products, and had to start going green."

And it's more than just guilt-free facials and manicures and non-toxic soaps. Chambers also installed furniture made from salvaged wood, used energy-saving lightbulbs, and even uses biodegradable slippers and toe-separators.

"I couldn't offer eyelash extensions because they had formaldehyde and could not be made naturally," said Chambers. "But we do have non-toxic nail polishes."

Wink (602 Vanderbilt Ave., between Prospect Place and St. Marks Avenue in Prospect Heights, (718) 230-3443). Open: Wednesday-Friday, 11 am-8 pm; Saturday, 10 am-7 pm; and Sunday, 11 am-5 pm. — Heather Holland

## DINING

### Pizza action

There's a new pizza kid on the block in DUMBO: a mere 100 yards from legendary pizza giant Grimaldi's — but Ignazio's owner Louis Termini (pictured) maintains that there's room for both.

"I'm not a rival — I'm a friendly neighbor," Termini said, smiling through his thick, long beard. "They're a landmark, and I'm the new kid on the block."

No rivalry? As if. "The Pizza" — a suggestion that there is no other version. And his Sicilian version is called "Opus Rex," a Latin term for a king of art.

Luke Grimaldi's Ignazio softens plenty of toppings, from the usual suspects (sausage, pepperoni, and some newcomers (cavender). And the solid wood and copper interior gives diners an alternative to Grimaldi's Sinatra-covered interior.

Termini said learned how to make pizza from his Italian grandmother, and has operated seven other pizzerias in Connecticut. But he grew up eating pizza every afternoon in Bensonhurst, and knew it was time to come back to Brooklyn.

Grimaldi's owner Frank Cioli said he's not worried about the competition for his restaurant, which sports long lines on most days.

"I'm happy if anyone comes along who's better," Cioli said. "If he can do it, great, but the proof is in the pudding."

Ignazio's Piza (4 Water St. at Old Fulton Street in DUMBO, (718) 522-2001). Closed Sunday and Monday. Cash only. For info, visit [www.ignaziospizza.com](http://www.ignaziospizza.com).

— Sarah Portlock and Gersh Kuntzman

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**HERE TO GO**

**EDITORS' PICKS**

**TUESDAY**  
April 14

**Write stuff**  
Remember writer L.J. Davis? Of course you don't! But you should. Here's a guy who was Jonathan Lethem before Jonathan Lethem was the Bard of Boerum Hill. Davis, whose 1971 novel, "A Meaningful Life," presages Lethem's "Fortress of Solitude" by three decades, will talk tonight about his career as the borough's most celebrated forgotten artist. And get this: Lethem (who actually was pals with Davis's son back in the day) will introduce him!

7 pm, L.J. Davis reading, BookCourt [163 Court St. between Pacific and Dean streets in Cobble Hill, (718) 875-3677]. Free.

**WEDNESDAY**  
April 15

**Sex & taxes**  
Everyone hates April 15 — so-called "Tax Day" because that's when your 1040s are due — so our friends at Babeland will try to make you feel better (a lot better) by paying the sales tax on any purchases today. The promotion is called, "No taxation without stimulation," of course. In addition, the first 100 people who enter the store today and say they've filed their taxes will get a free Gold Digger vibrator — a value that's worth a lot more than the \$15 price.

Babeland Brooklyn [462 Bergen St. between Flatbush and Fifth avenues, (718) 638-3820]. Store opens at noon.

**THURSDAY**  
April 16

**Led'ing the way**  
Arguably the world's greatest living choreographer, Merce Cunningham, celebrates his 90th birthday with a new work, accompanied by composer Takahisa Kurosugi, as well as live music by Sonic Youth and Led Zepplin legend John Paul Jones. Wow, dancing days are here again.

7 pm, Merce Cunningham at 90, BAM [30 Lafayette Ave. between Ashland and St. Felix places in Fort Greene, (718) 230-4352]. \$25-\$75.

**FRIDAY**  
April 17

**Green fairy**  
Absinthe, the verdant alcohol that helped inspire a generation of Bohemian artists before it was summarily banned by the temperance-obsessed upper classes at the turn of the 20th century, returns with a vengeance at Morton's tonight. Accompanied by tasty treats like Oysters Rockefeller, an Absinthe expert (and who isn't one really?) will guide tasters through its delights. Hallucinations and madness optional.

6 pm, Absinthe Tasting, Morton's the Steakhouse [339 Adams St. at W. 10th St. in Downtown, (718) 596-2700]. \$45.

**SATURDAY**  
April 18

**Top brass**  
Not since "The Music Man" — which famously had 76 of them — has the trombone been properly celebrated. Thankfully, Ibeam Studio in Gowanus is devoting every Saturday this month to the brass family's most under-rated member. Tonight, catch the FunBrassStick Orchestra with Reut Reggev (pictured), the Iggy Foni Duo, Max Siegel Trio, and the Gerstein Collective.

8 pm, Trombone Festival, Ibeam Music Studio [168 Seventh St. at Third Avenue in Gowanus, www.ibeambrooklyn.com]. \$10.

**THE DAYS IN BROOKLYN**

**SAT. APRIL 11**

**OUTDOORS AND TOURS**  
BIRDWATCHING: Free. Noon. Prospect Park Audubon Center [Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue, Prospect Park, (718) 287-3400]. www.prospectpark.org/audubon.

DISCOVERY TOUR: Meet birds and other wildlife, guided by a naturalist. Free. 3 pm. Prospect Park Audubon Center (see venue info above).

**PERFORMANCE**  
STREET DANCE, "CATAPULT": Elizabeth Streib's high-flying dance troupe. \$20-\$10/kids. 3 pm and 7 pm. Streib Lab for Action Mechanics [51 W. First St. between Wythe and Kent avenues in Williamsburg, (718) 584-6891]. www.streiblab.com.

THEATER, "IN LOVE WITH MOM": Play by Lisa Cooper. \$20. 7 pm. Jazz [215 Columbus St. at Woodchuck Street in Columbia Street Waterfront, (718) 395-3214]. www.jalpy.biz.

STEVE CROMITY AND HIS TRIO: Part of the Central Brooklyn Jazz Festival. \$20. 7-10 pm. [247 Hancock St. at Marcy Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant, (917) 685-3508].

THEATER, "LA DIDONE": Baroque opera by Francesco Cavalli, staged by the Wooster Group. \$47-\$50. 8 pm. St. Ann's Warehouse [38 Water St. at Dock Street in DUMBO, (718) 254-8779]. www.stannwarehouse.org.

THEATER, "TIMES MISC247": A multi-media exploration of today's most-censored media world. \$15-\$18. 8 pm. Brick Theater in Williamsburg, (718) 907-6189]. www.bricktheater.com.

THEATER, "SHAKESPEARE IN HOLLYWOOD": Comedy. \$15 (\$12 children and seniors). 8 pm. Heights Players [26 Willow Pl. between Johnson and State streets in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 237-2752]. www.heightsplayers.org.

CLASSICAL CONCERT: St. Petersburg String Quartet plays works by Mozart, Piat and Tchaikovsky. \$40-\$35 seniors, \$20 students. 8 pm. Bargemusic/Puller Ferry Landing, Old Fulton Street at the East River in DUMBO, (718) 624-2083]. www.bargemusic.org.

TROMBONE FESTIVAL: With the FunBrassStick Orchestra with Reut Reggev and Joel From Day 8 pm. Max Siegel Trio (7 pm). Ben Gerstein Collective (10 pm). \$10. 8 pm. Ibeam Music Studio [168 Seventh St. between Second and Third avenues in Gowanus, ibeambrooklyn.com].

DANCE, "L'APPARTÉMENT": From Spanish group P.M. dance. \$15. 8 pm. Brooklyn Arts Exchange [421 Fifth Ave. at Eighth Street in Park Slope, (718) 832-5018]. www.bakx.org.

MUSIC, DUANE PITRE: With Tony Conrad. \$10. 8 pm. Issue Project Room [512 Third St. at Third Avenue in Gowanus, (718) 330-0313]. www.issueprojectroom.org.

**SALES AND MARKETS**  
WINTER ANTIQUES MARKET: Free. 11 am-6 pm. [16 Front St. at Washington Street in DUMBO].

**PERFORMANCE**  
JAZZ WITH ZACK O'FARRILL QUARTET: 5:30-6 pm. Puppets' Jazz Bar [481 Fifth Ave. at 11th Street in Park Slope, (718) 499-2522]. www.puppetsjazz.com.

THEATER, "SHAKESPEARE IN HOLLYWOOD": 2 pm. See Saturday, April 11.

STREET DANCE, "CATAPULT": 3 pm. See Saturday, April 11.

CLASSICAL CONCERT: 3 pm. See Saturday, April 11.

MUSIC, AK ONDA: Electronic musician performs and speaks with Alan Light. Free. 8 pm. Issue Project Room [232 Third St. at Third Avenue in Gowanus, (718) 330-0313]. www.issueprojectroom.org.

THEATER, "LA DIDONE": 7 pm. See Saturday, April 11.

**SALES AND MARKETS**  
WINTER ANTIQUES MARKET: See Saturday, April 11.

**OTHER**  
ALAN LOCKE AND THE HARLEM RENAISSANCE: Sunday platform with Bob Benson. Free. 11 am. Brooklyn Society for Ethical Culture [53 Prospect Park West at Second Street in Park Slope, (718) 768-2972]. www.bsec.org.

FILM, "BIKE SHORTS": Short films about bikes. \$5. 8 pm. Galapagos Art Space [144 Main St. at Riker Street in DUMBO, (718) 228-8500]. www.galapagosartspace.com.

**MON. APRIL 13**

SPLASH WEEK: Learn basic swimming. Free. Dodge YMCA [225 Atlantic Ave. between Court Street and Boerum Place, second floor in Downtown Brooklyn, (718) 625-1361]. www.dodgeymca.org.

TOUR, BROOKLYN BRIDGE AND BROOKLYN HEIGHTS: Led by Big Onion Walking Tours. \$15 (\$12 students and seniors). 1 pm. City Hall Park Southeast corner of Broadway and Chambers Street, Manhattan in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 499-3001]. www.bigonion.com.

ART OPENING: Paintings by Rafael Buena. Free. 6 pm. The Hogar Collective [347 Grand St. at Houston Street in Williamsburg, (718) 388-7022]. www.hogarcollective.com.

READING, MATTHEW AARON GOODMAN: Author of "Hold Love Stronger." Free. 7 pm. BookCourt [163 Court St. between Pacific and Dean streets in Cobble Hill, (718) 875-6077]. www.bookcourt.org.

READING, DONNA MINOWITZ: Author of "Fertile Romance." Refreshments served. Free. 7:30 pm. Prospect Park YMCA [357 Ninth St. between Fifth and Sixth avenues in Park Slope, (718) 768-1274].

THEATER, "THE RETURN OF FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE": From Swedish performance group KILL. \$10. 8 pm. Galapagos Art Space [16 Main St. at Water Street in DUMBO, (718) 228-8500]. www.galapagosartspace.com.

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## Coney wins the half-marathon

By Ben Muessig

The Brooklyn Paper

Thousands of legs are about to give Coney Island a shot in the arm.

For the first time, the Brooklyn Half Marathon will end, rather than begin, at the famed Boardwalk in attempt to "stimulate the economic impact in the area" that has fallen on tough times, said Meghan Chisholm, a spokeswoman for the New York Road Runners Club.

Indeed, upon completion of the 13.1-mile race on May 30, it is customary for the thousands of sweat-soaked participants to dash to nearby eateries for replenishment (Gatorade or something stronger).

"It's very common to go out right after a race," said Chisholm, who predicted the day would be a boon for cafes and bars. "And it won't just be the runners — their families and friends will be there to cheer them on at the finish."

Last year, more than 5,000 runners ran — and brought plenty of empty stomachs and parched throats to the finish line.

Brooklyn Half Marathon will start in Prospect Park at 8 a.m. on May 30 and end on the Boardwalk in Coney Island. For information, call (212) 860-4455 or visit [www.nyrr.org](http://www.nyrr.org).

## CONEY...

Continued from page 5

• Cargill's Restaurant has been serving Italian fare since 1907, and, of course, it'll be back. But if you plan on eating there after a day at the beach, make sure you bring a pair of long pants, because this is a classy joint.

• Regular summer events such as the Mermid Parade on June 20 and the Sun Music Festival on July 18 will also return. And, thankfully, a lot of hot women and men will be back in the annual AWP Beach Volleyball tournament from July 3-5.

### In limbo

• The legendary brick-oven pizzeria in Ditmars was damaged by a fire in March, and there's no word yet when the Neptune Avenue pizza place will reopen. The shop's phone line has been temporarily disconnected.

• While some of the Boardwalk merchants mentioned above have negotiated new leases with Thor Equities, the beloved dice, Ruby's Old Time Bar had not yet reached a deal. It would be a sad day for many if Ruby's does not reopen.

### The wild cards

The odds of creating an

energetic, enlarged amusement area rest on the shoulders of the Bloomberg Administration and Thor Equities. The two sides continue to tussle over the city's plan to rezone the area, and each side has its interim activities in the works for this summer.

• As reported in The Brooklyn Paper, the city is negotiating to bring the alleged Greatest Show on Earth, Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus, to a beachfront lot this summer.

• Thor Equities, which has amassed a fiefdom in the amusement area, has announced that its vacant lots, including the former Astro-land theme park, will be busling with rides, slideshows, and "foodie tents," including stalls manned by the beloved Latino food vendors from Red Hook Park.

• Once Thor puts in its tents and rides, Coney Island is going to look bigger than it has been in years, said a normally critical Dick Zisgan, who founded the Coney Island Circus Sideshow.

And if the city inks a deal with Ringling Brothers?

• "The amusement area would look huge if that if that comes true," Zisgan told The Brooklyn Paper.

— with Heather Holland and Emilia Brock

# Love bites!

This writer loved and lost — but kept right on eating

By Ben Muessig

The Brooklyn Paper

Two decades of romantic ups and downs left author Giulia Melucci with a broken heart — but never an empty stomach. In her literary debut, "I Loved, I Lost, I Made Spaghetti," the Park Slope resident and Bay Ridge native details her turbulent love life, as well as reveal recipes she cooked to woo men ("Pear Cake for Friends with Benefits") and console herself after break-ups ("No Nookie Gnocchi").

"The book combines food with the frustrations of the past 20-odd years of failed dating — and it shows that I wasn't just failing all that time, I was learning how to cook," said Melucci, who will read at Barnes & Noble in Park Slope on April 14.

Melucci had long wanted to write a book about her love life, but she worried that the story might be bland if she didn't include the recipes to spice it up.

"It was just writing about the men in my life — I wasn't thinking about writing a book about food," said the writer, whose book details her relationships with cartoonists, drunks and writers, among others.

"But I knew that I had to do something

more original."

Being original meant interspersing brutally honest snippets of love and heartbreak with recipes that are just as personal as her real-life accounts. From the farfalle she cooked after a romantic rendezvous ("First-Date Butterflies") to post-coital pastries ("Morning-After Pumpkin Bread").

Here's a Brooklyn Paper favorite:

**Spaghettini in a White Truffle Oil Peignoir**

Salt  
1/2 pound of spaghettini (or thin spaghetti)

3 tablespoons white truffle oil  
Freshly grated Parmigiano  
Fresh ground pepper

Cook spaghettini. Drain and return to pot, add truffle oil. Divide into two bowls, get back in bed, bring along the cheese and pepper. Clothing optional.

Giulia Melucci will read from "I Loved, I Lost, I Made Spaghetti" on April 14 at Barnes & Noble (267 Seventh Ave., at Sixth Street in Park Slope, (718) 832-9066, 7:30 p.m.



Pasta queen: Author Giulia Melucci will read from her book, "I Loved, I Lost, I Made Spaghetti," on April 14 at the Park Slope Barnes & Noble.

# Hooray for 'Hollywood'

Heights Players' 'Shakespeare' show is Bard-y fun

By Mike McLaughlin

The Brooklyn Paper

The Heights Players' latest production, "Shakespeare in Hollywood," is solid and reliable — like an iambic pentameter straight from the Bard.

The entertaining play, which runs through April 19, is the story of a sophisticated film director striving to make his magnum opus — in this case a version of "A Midsummer Night's Dream" — under stifling conditions created by neurotic studio executives driven solely by the bottom line, and a Puritanical watchdog who's fighting to tone down the allegedly lewd plot.

But wait, that's not all. Things really get hairy when Oberon and Puck from the actual Shakespeare play magically appear on the studio set.

As in the actual source material,



Two on the floor: Carly Howard and Dustin Cross play out a scene from the Heights Players' new comedy, "Shakespeare in Hollywood," now through April 19.

love triangles and bedlam ensue (this is Shakespeare via Tinseltown — did you expect anything else?).

The Brooklyn Heights community theater group cobbed together a talented cast for this version of the 2003 play commissioned by the Royal Shakespeare Company.

Tony Pater-niti warmly plays Max Reinhardt, the cantankerous Austrian director.

Dean Schildkrant couldn't have portrayed a more uptight Will Hays of the decency squad if he had a wire hanger in his suit jacket.

And there's no wonder why the co-charming Carly Howard as Olivia, an up-and-coming actress in Reinhardt's film, captures the heart of the dis-

placed Oberon, himself a dominating, sweet-talking monarch played by Christopher Lee Short.

The play is filled with jokes and the audience on Sunday chorled at many of them, but the script went to the well a little too often for some laughs.

Case in point, there's one character who plays an actor in drag for much of the performance, but his repeated efforts to get a laugh by adjusting and readjusting his fake bosom grew tiresome. Then again, sometimes it works perfectly, as when Shirley Temple makes perfectly timed cameos, including one when she stumbles onto the stage — icepick on head.

— after a night of debauchery at a studio executive's manse. But even in those few moments when the gags fail, there's little time to notice. The plot moves briskly, actors file in and out from all over the black box theater and it's on to the next scene all hurtling towards a Shakespearean climax, comedic of course. All's well that ends well.

## THEATER

"Shakespeare in Hollywood" at the Heights Players (267 Seventh St., between Joralemon and State streets in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 237-2752) through April 19. For info, visit [www.heightsplayers.org](http://www.heightsplayers.org).

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**APRIL RECOMMENDATIONS**

**These are Darrin's Best Buys for April!**

**Cata Mayor Sauvignon Blanc**  
Now, this is an amazing value! **\$8.95**

Now, this is an amazing value! Cata Mayor Sauvignon Blanc does best in a cool climate, giving us abundant aromas of peach, mango and fresh herbs. Dry and crisp on the palate, this is an ideal wine pair with shellfish and almost any seafood (Sorry ... that rare-seared tuna steak will taste better with a light red.) The Atlantic influence makes this vineyard the cleanest ecosystem in all of South America!

**Palmer Merlot Cuvee**  
The return of a long-time favorite! The North Fork of Long Island has a maritime climate more like Bordeaux than any other American wine-making site, so it's no wonder that the Merlots made there are so Old World in their flavor, balance and sensibility. This smooth, soft on the palate red is the opposite of those California "Fruit Bomb" wines. Try this with roasted chicken or salmon steak!

**Hunawir Edelzwicker Selection**  
The name means "Noble Blend," and you've just GOT to try it. Before WWII, nearly all of the wines in Alsace were made like this: "field blends" of grapes. Here, we have a delicious, dry white wine with white flowers, citrus and honey on the nose that is absolutely refreshing to drink! Open a bottle as an after-work aperitif, with seafood, cheeses or chicken. No oak ... just the bright, lively taste of the wine!

**Imperio De Sentidos Cabernet Sauvignon**  
Edna Lewis used to say "If it grows together, it goes together!" Argentina is famous for the amazing grass-fed beef raised there, and for the rich, heady red wines that go so well with it! Beautifully balances with red fruit flavors, a good amount of soft and supple tannin and a moderate alcohol level, this a terrific red, with plenty of bang for the buck!

**Buy Darrin's Best Buys 3 Pack and Save 10%** **\$34.51**

**Darrin's April Discovery Wines!**

**Brooklyn Oenology Viognier**  
Grown in the cool, maritime influenced North Fork of Long Island, this delicious, mouth watering Viognier (vee-on-YAY) has the aroma of fresh white peaches that are a hallmark of this grape. Smooth and elegant on the palate with flavor notes of honeysuckle, peaches and lime, Viognier has been a favorite of Chefs and Sommeliers for years ... and I'd like to introduce it to you. Discover your next favorite wine, now!

**Kermit Lynch Cotes du Rhone**  
Kermit Lynch is one of the most trusted wine importers in America. Here, he has worked with his favorite wine makers to create a wine just for him! Dark ruby red in color with aromas of red cherry, ripe raspberry, herbs and peppercorns. On the palate, there are bursts of ripe fruit along with dusty, earthy notes. Nothing "jammy" here, just a well made, well balanced wine that drinks like a \$20 bottle!

**Buy my April Discovery Wines Two Pack and Save 10%** **\$30.10**

**April Spirit of the Month**

**Cooler Swan Superior Dairy Cream Liqueur**  
Cooler Swan is simply a remarkable cream liqueur. It blends velvety smooth chocolate with delicate infusions of Madagascar vanilla, dark cocoa from the Cote d'Ivoire, and for added character, a rich, delicious hint of Single Malt Irish Whiskey. This luscious liqueur finishes with a gentle, graceful fade. Have it on the rocks, give a jolt to your coffee, pour some over your favorite sundae, or blend with a milk shake ... you owe it to yourself to try this one!

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## 9 DAYS...

Continued from page 6

**TUES, APRIL 14**  
**SPLASH WEEK:** See Monday, April 13.  
**NEW MOM'S GROUP:** 55 (suggested), 1 pm. Gumbo 493 Atlantic Ave. between News and Third Avenues in Boerum Hill. (718) 855-7800.  
**CANCER SUPPORT GROUP:** 3 pm. New York Methodist Hospital 1506 Sixth St. between Seventh and Eighth Avenues in Park Slope. (718) 780-5593.  
**READING, L.J. DAVIS:** Author of "Hold Love Strong" Jonathan Leitham, who wrote the introduction, also appears. Free. 7 pm. BookCourt 163 Court St. between Pacific and Dean streets in Cobble Hill. (718) 875-3677. www.bookcourt.org.  
**READING, GIULIA MELUCCI:** Author of "I Loved, I Lost, I Made Spaghetti." Free. 7:30 pm. Barnes & Noble Park Slope 267 Seventh Ave. at Fifth Street in Park Slope. (718) 832-9066.  
**READING, RICK REID:** Author of poetry collection to be hung from the ceiling of Strings of Negro Length. Free. 7:30 pm. Word 126 Franklin St. at Milton Street in Greenpoint. wordbrooklyn.wordpress.com.  
**THEATER, "LA DIONE":** 8 pm. See Saturday, April 11.

**WED, APRIL 15**  
**TAXATION STIMULATION:** Free vibrations for the first 100 people who have paid their taxes on time. Babalard Brooklyn 462 Bergen St. between Flatbush and Fifth avenues. (718) 638-3803. Store opens at noon.  
**SPLASH WEEK:** See Monday, April 13.  
**FILM, "DAISY MILLER":** Peter Bogdanovich's 1974 adaptation. Callish Henry James scholars follows 6:50 showing. \$11.430. 6:50. 9 pm. Brooklyn Academy of Music 30 Lafayette Ave. near St. Felix Street in Fort Greene. (718) 636-4100. www.bam.org.  
**TALK, MEDIA COVERAGE OF POLITICS AND FINANCE:** Reservations required. Free. 5:50 pm. Kumbie Theater, Long Island University 11 University Plaza at Willoughby Street in Downtown. (718) 489-1026. www.brooklyn.bu.edu/kumbieheater.  
**READING, "SPECIMEN DAYS":** Members of the St. Francis College community read from Wak Whitman's memoir. Free. 6 pm. St. Francis College 180 Remsen St. between Court and Clinton streets in Brooklyn Heights. (718) 489-5222. www.whitmanproject.org.  
**ART TALK:** Curator Lisa Binder discusses sculptor El Anatsui's work, currently on view at the BRIC Rotunda Gallery. Free. 7 pm. Brooklyn Historical Society 128 Pierpoint St. at Clinton Street in Brooklyn Heights. (718) 222-4111. www.brooklynhistory.org.  
**POETRY READING:** Alice Neley and Ron Padgett. Free. 7 pm. Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch/Grand Army Plaza at Eastern Parkway in Park Slope. (718) 230-2100.  
**READING, JOANNA SMITH RAKOFF:** Author of "A Fortunate Age." Free. 7:30 pm. Barnes & Noble Park Slope 267 Seventh Ave. at Fifth Street in Park Slope. (718) 832-9066.  
**THEATER, "LA DIONE":** 8 pm. See Saturday, April 11.  
**MUSIC, "SHADES OF JAZZ ON NOIR":** Classic film noir clips alongside live jazz. \$12. 8 pm. Galapagos Art Space 116 Main St. at Water Street in DUMBO. (718) 222-8500. www.galapagosartspace.com.

**THURS, APRIL 16**  
**SPLASH WEEK:** See Monday, April 13.  
**SMALL BUSINESS WORKSHOP:** Learn how to start a business. Registration required. Free. 10 am. NYC College of Technology 25 Chapel St. at Jay Street. 11th floor in Downtown Brooklyn. (718) 797-0171.  
**HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY:**



Wye Oak plays the Bell House in Gowanus on April 14.

**http://**

For more Brooklyn Nightlife options, see our listings at [BrooklynPaper.com/Nightlife](http://BrooklynPaper.com/Nightlife)

Philosophy Professor Jeffrey Bernstein talks on "What is Given in Forgiveness?" Free. 11:15 am. St. Francis College 180 Remsen St. between Court and Clinton streets in Brooklyn Heights. www.stfranciscollege.edu.  
**ART OPENING:** Paintings and photography by Indio Antonio Alvarez. Free. 3:30 pm. Henry Gregg Gallery 111 Front St. at Washington Street. Suite 226 in DUMBO. www.henrygregggallery.com.  
**FIXERS COLLECTIVE:** Bring something to be fixed, and learn about fixing, mending and remaking. Free. 5-8 pm. Proteus Gowanus 543 Union St. at Nevins Street in Gowanus. proteusgowanus.com.  
**ART OPENING:** Photos by Roberto Salati. Free. 5 pm. Farmart Gallery 111 Front St. at Washington Street. Suite 212 in DUMBO. (718) 578-4476. www.farmartgallery.com.  
**DANCE, MERCE CUNNINGHAM AT 90:** Legendary choreographer presents new work in collaboration with John Paul Jones, Takhia Kousi and Sonic Youth. \$25-\$75. 7 pm. Brooklyn Academy of Music 30 Lafayette Ave. near St. Felix Street in Fort Greene. (718) 636-4100. www.bam.org.  
**READING, PAULA URBURU:** Author of "American Eve: Evelyn Nesbit, Stanford White and the Crime of the Century." Free. 7 pm. Barnes & Noble Court Street 106 Court St. between Livingston and State streets in Downtown Brooklyn. (718) 246-4990.  
**JAZZ WITH THE DAVE VALENTIN QUINTETT:** Part of the Central Brooklyn Jazz Festival. \$10 (\$7 students and seniors). 7 pm. Brooklyn Public Library's Central branch (Grand Army Plaza at Eastern Parkway) in Park Slope. (718) 230-2100. www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org.  
**READING, JAMES AND KARLA MURRAY:**

Authors of "Store Front: The Disappearing Face of New York City." Free. 7 pm. BookCourt 163 Court St. between Pacific and Dean streets in Cobble Hill. (718) 875-3677. www.bookcourt.org.  
**BOOK DISCUSSION:** Michael Houellebecq's "Possibility of an Island." Free. 7:30 pm. Firebird Books 1121 Columbia St. at Kane Street in Columbia Street Waterfront. (718) 643-8484. www.firebirdbooks.com.

**MUSIC, WALTER THOMPSON ORCHESTRA:** New work by Anthony Braxton. \$20 (\$15 students and seniors). 7:30 pm. Inondale Center 835 E. Oxford St. at Lafayette Avenue in Fort Greene. (718) 488-9233. www.inondale.org.  
**JAZZ WITH HOWARD ALDEN AND FRIENDS:** \$20 (\$10 students). 8 pm. Bargemusic/Fulton Ferry Landing, Old Fulton Street at the East River in DUMBO. (718) 624-2083. www.bargemusic.org.

**FRI, APRIL 17**  
**SPLASH WEEK:** See Monday, April 13.  
**ART OPENING:** "Inspiration and Interpretation," a group show. Free. 6-9 pm. Clay Space 1205 Gallery 1205 Manhattan Ave. at Ash Street in Greenpoint. www.claystreet1205.com.  
**ART OPENING:** Artwork by Matt Wyoff and Ken Butler. Free. 6-9 pm. The Hogar Collection 362 Grand St. at Havermyer Street in Williamsburg. (718) 388-5022. www.hogarcollection.com.  
**ASINTE TASTING:** Try the green muse for yourself. Morton's the Steakhouse 137 Adams St. at Willoughby Street in Downtown. (718) 596-2700. \$45.

**STREET DANCE, "CATAPULT":** 7 pm. See Saturday, April 11.  
**ART OPENING:** "Off the Grid," a group show. Free. 19 pm. Under Merce Gallery 656 Fifth Ave. between 19th and 20th streets in Greenwood Heights. (718) 788-0170. www.undermerce.com.  
**MUSIC, "ST. MATTHEW PASSION":** Jonathan Miller's production of Bach's masterwork. \$30-\$90. 7:30 pm. BAM Harvey Theater 651 Fulton St. at Rockwell Place in Fort Greene. (718) 636-4100. www.bam.org.  
**DANCE, MERCE CUNNINGHAM AT 90:** Includes post-show discussion. 7:30 pm. See Thursday, April 16.  
**MUSIC, WALTER THOMPSON ORCHESTRA:** 7:30 pm. See Thursday, April 16.  
**THEATER, "SHAKESPEARE IN HOLLYWOOD":** 8 pm. See Saturday, April 11.  
**THEATER, "SHAKESPEARE IN HOLLYWOOD":** 8 pm. See Saturday, April 11.  
**AVANT-GARDE MUSIC:** With Khabu Doug Young, Stacey Kruvick Dun and Bahadur Clever/Flood Trn. \$10 (suggested). 8 pm. Beem Music Studio 188 Seventh St. between Second and Third avenues in Gowanus. beambrooklyn.com.  
**CLASSICAL CONCERT:** Works by Musorgsky and Tchaikovsky. \$35 (\$30 seniors, \$15 students). 8 pm. Bargemusic/Fulton Ferry Landing, Old Fulton Street at the East River in DUMBO. (718) 624-2083. www.bargemusic.org.  
**DANCE, NEW WORK, NEW YORK:** Contemporary work from six emerging New York artists. \$10 (suggested). 8 pm. Brooklyn Arts Exchange 421 Fifth Ave. at Eighth Street in Park Slope. (718) 832-2018. www.bae.org.

**SAT, APRIL 18**  
**OUTDOORS AND TOURS**  
**BIRDWATCHING WALK:** Free. 7 am. Prospect Park (Enter at Ninth Street and Prospect Park West in Prospect Park). www.brooklynbirdclub.org/trips.html#4.

See 9 DAYS on page 9

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## 9 DAYS...

Continued from page 9

**TOUR, GREEN-WOOD CEMETERY:** Led by Big Onion Walking Tours. \$15-\$12 students and seniors. 11 am. Green-Wood's main entrance (Fifth Avenue and 25th Street in Sunset Park, (718) 499-3001). www.big-onion.com

**"WILDMAN" STEVE BRILL:** Naturalist leads his wild food and ecology tour of Prospect Park. Reservations required. \$15-\$10 children. 11:45 am. Grand Army Plaza entrance. (914) 835-2153. www.wildman-steve.com

**BIRCHWATERING:** See Saturday, April 11.

**DISCOVERY TOUR:** See Saturday, April 11.

**PERFORMANCE**  
**TALK, "JAZZ: The Women's View Point":** Panel discussion and performance. Part of the Central Brooklyn Jazz Festival. \$10, 2-5 pm. Bedford Stuyvesant Recreation (134th Street, St. Mary's at Jersey Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant). www.centralbrooklynjazzfestival.com

**STREET DANCE, "CATAPULT":** 3 and 7 pm. See Saturday, April 11.

**THEATER, "FUDGY MEERS":** David Lindsay Abber directs reading of his play. Dinner served. \$16, 7:30 pm. Prospect Park (VACAS 137 North St. between Fifth and Sixth avenues, (718) 568-7100). www.pmcny.org/index.php?id=1088

**DANCE, MERCE CUNNINGHAM AT 90:** 7:30 pm. See Thursday, April 16.

**MUSIC, "ST. MATTHEW PASSION":** 7:30 pm. See Friday, April 17.

**MUSIC, WALTER THOMPSON ORCHESTRA:** See Thursday, April 16.

**THEATER, "LA DIDONE":** 8 pm. See Saturday, April 11.

**THEATER, "SHAKESPEARE IN HOLLYWOOD":** 8 pm. See Saturday, April 11.

**CLASSICAL CONCERT:** Works by Schubert, Mozart and Schumann. \$40 (\$35 seniors, \$20 students). 8 pm. Bergamusic (Fulton Ferry Landing, Old Fulton Street at the East River in DUMBO, (718) 524-2083). www.bergamusic.org

**JAZZ WITH CHUCK MACKINON'S MACETTES:** \$10 (35 students and seniors). 8 pm. Brooklyn Conservatory of Music (58 Seventh Ave. between Second and Third avenues in Gowanus, (718) 622-3300). www.bbcm.org

**DANCE, NEW WORK, NEW YORK:** 8 pm. See Friday, April 17.

**MUSIC, "FESTIVAL: With the TLT 50ket featuring Christopher McIntyre (8 pm), "Bungles" featuring Brian (9 pm), Joe Fiedler (10 pm), \$10, 8 pm. Ibeam Music Studio (160 Seventh St. between Second and Third avenues in Gowanus, (718) 622-3300). www.bbcm.org**

**SALES AND MARKETS**

**Flea Market:** Free. 10 am-5 pm. Bklyn Loughlin Memorial High School (357 Clermont Ave. at Lafayette Avenue in Fort Greene). www.brooklyn flea.com

**THRIFT SALE:** Free. 10 am-3 pm. New Utrecht Reformed Church (18th Avenue and 84th Street in Bensonhurst, (718) 234-0678).

**OTHER**

**SPLASH WEEK:** See Monday, April 13.

**READING, "POETS AT THE TOP OF THE HILL":** Open outdoor poetry reading, sponsored by the Walt Whitman Project. Free. Noon-1 pm. Fort Greene Park, Richard Wright bench (Myrtle Avenue and Washington Park in Fort Greene, (718) 261-8504). www.whitmanproject.org

**READING, MICHAEL HORVATH:** Author of "Brighter Graphite." Free. 2 pm. Barnes & Noble Park Slope (260 Seventh Ave. at Fifth Street in Park Slope, (718) 832-9066).

**READING, ENRIQUE CLO:** Author of "The Faraway War," about a Brooklynite who made his mark in Cuba. Free. 2 pm. Brooklyn Historical Society (128 Pierpoint St. at Clinton Street in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 222-4111). www.brooklyn-history.org

**TALK, VINTAGE LIRR POSTCARDS:** Retired historian David Morrison speaks. Part of the exhibit honoring the Long Island Railroad's 175th Anniversary. \$5-\$3 children and seniors. 2 pm. New York Transit Museum (Boerum Place and Schermerhorn Street in Downtown Brooklyn). www.mta.info/mtamuseum

**DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SYMPOSIUM:** Panel discussion. Free. 4 pm. The James E. Davis Arts Building (80 Varian Pl. at St. Paul Avenue in Fort Greene).

**TALK, JONATHAN MILLER:** British theater and opera director discusses his production of Beethoven's "Fidelio." Free. 5 pm. Brooklyn Academy of Music (30 Lafayette Avenue at Fifth Street in Fort Greene, (718) 636-4100). www.bam.org

**SUN, APRIL 19**

**OUTDOORS AND TOURS**

**TOUR, FORT GREENE AND CLINTON HILL:** Includes peek inside the Prison Ship Mary's Monument. Free. 11 am-1 pm. Fort Greene Park Visitor Center (Enter park at Myrtle Avenue and Washington Park in Fort Greene, (718) 723-3216).

**DISCOVERY TOUR:** See Saturday, April 11.

**PERFORMANCE**

**JAZZ WITH ZACK OTFARILLI QUARTET:** 56. Noon-4 pm. Puppet's Jazz Bar (481 Fifth Ave. at 11th Street in Park Slope, (718) 499-2623). www.puppetsjazz.com

**THEATER, "FUDGY MEERS":** 1:30 pm. See Saturday, April 11.

**THEATER, "SHAKESPEARE IN HOLLYWOOD":** 2 pm. See Saturday, April 11.

**STREET DANCE, "CATAPULT":** 3 pm. See Saturday, April 11.

**DANCE, MERCE CUNNINGHAM AT 90:** 3 pm. See Thursday, April 16.

# Cops vow to look into 'gay' pizza

## Go-go night will be investigated

By Mike McLaughlin

The Brooklyn Paper

Police say they will investigate a Carroll Gardens pizzeria that features scantily clad male go-go dancers once a week. The weekly "Fondle" party, which started in February at Carroll Gardens Pizza on Court Street, didn't get mentioned beyond the listings section of most newspapers. But on Sunday, the New York Times wrote about the gay-themed bacchanal, creating not only a maelstrom for the pizzeria, but renewing debate over whether tight-knit Carroll Gardens was truly welcoming to newcomers.

"[That Times article] was the first I heard of [Fondle] night," Captain Kenneth Corey of the 76th Precinct, which covers Carroll Gardens, told members of the Carroll Gardens Neighborhood Association on Monday night. "We're going to determine the legality of it. If they're

outside of it, then we're going to take action."

A police source told The Brooklyn Paper that authorities would examine whether South Brooklyn Pizza violated cabaret license regulations.

The looming police threat evidently arose after the Times story revealed that a key detail about the "Fondle" party: it includes go-go dancers.

The article suggested that strippers are incompatible with the Old Guy Lady's understanding of Carroll Gardens as an insular, old Italian neighborhood. The neighborhood, of course, is changing, and many of the newer residents don't mind a go-go night.

"It doesn't bother me," said Omar Stewart, who lives in the neighborhood. "I like to think of myself as a progressive."

Others shared that liberal idea. "To each his own," said Michael Rosario, who works next door to the restaurant. —with Emilia Bopolo

# Checkers checking in on Court Street

## 'Busy Chef' site will be burger joint

By Ben Muesig

The Brooklyn Paper

The Busy Chef is about to become the burger chef. The fast-food joint Checkers is gearing up to open in the Court Street spot vacated by the alleged scammer Kaffman, who was arrested last year for embezzling \$25,000 from customers' credit cards.

In its self-described "first scoop," the blog Flappy Days reported on Monday that the Florida-based chain eatery will open at the location between Schermerhorn and State streets.

Tariq Ali, a manager of the planned Checkers eatery, confirmed the news for The Brooklyn Paper, adding that the restaurant will boast 25-30 seats when it opens in mid-May and will offer prices that are "better than the rest."

It's a welcome change from the chain — which also sells burgers, dogs and milkshakes under the name Ruby's — that did not respond by



Work is continuing on a Checkers burger joint that will open at the former Busy Chef restaurant.

deadline. Unlike many of the 800 eateries in the Checkers empire, the Court Street location will not be a drive-thru.

In the months following the closure of Busy Chef, many eateries have expressed interest in opening in the closed eatery's locations.

Last month, Melissa Murphy, a Brooklyn Sweet

pastry chef behind Sweet Melissa in Park Slope and Carroll Gardens, said she is considering opening a Brooklyn Heights outpost of her bake shop in the former Busy Chef location on Henry Street. —with Dustin Sepulow

# Brooklyn blogger Guskind is mourned



More than 100 people mourned blogger Robert Guskind at a memorial service at the Brooklyn Lyceum in Park Slope last Saturday.

By Gersh Kuntzman

The Brooklyn Paper

Roughly 100 people — from the politicians he challenged to the neighborhood activists he championed to even the Red Hook food vendors he celebrated — mourned blogger Bob Guskind last Saturday in Park Slope.

The event ran for more than four hours, and was filled with speeches, a video and the presentation of a proclamation that passed the state Assembly last week.

"Quite a few people who spoke... had never met Bob in person," said Louise Crawford, whose Web site, Only the Blog Knows Brooklyn, praised Guskind's "Gowanus Lounge" blog when he was alive. "He was (obviously) a cheerleader and a mentor. It's amazing how one man managed to connect to so many people, had an impact on so many neighborhoods and civic activists, and produced such a huge

output of skilled urban reporting."

Speakers included Jake Dobkin of Gothamist.com, Lockhart Steele of Curbed.com, and Norman Oder of the seminal Atlantic Yards Report.

Oder, referring perhaps to both Guskind's well-documented work ethic, as well as his struggles with drugs, said that Guskind, "worked harder than most people [and] lived a lot of hours, but he still deserved to be here another 20 years. And whatever the technology would be — you'll probably be able to touch your tooth instead of typing — Bob would have been in the middle of it."

After the tributes were done, another fitting ode to Guskind was provided by Rafael Soler, who donated trays of the famed pupusas that he serves each summer in Red Hook Park. He has praised Guskind for not abandoning the vendors when the Parks Department made life difficult for them last year.

# ROOKIE WINS...

Continued from page 1  
tus Ed Weinroth, who collected the trophy for the rookie. "I can't say more right now, because I have to go call my mom."

Brooklyn Paper Editor Gersh Kuntzman was more effusive than the humble scribe. "Now I can tell: Mike McLaughlin is one of the greats," Kuntzman said. "It's customary in these instances for editors to take credit for their leadership, but in this case, it would be unwarranted. Mike is a natural who hands in stellar, crystal clear copy every day."

Before joining The Brooklyn Paper in 2007, McLaughlin had earned a master's degree at New School University in that most useful of disciplines, international affairs. He also had several short stints at WNYC and the Buenos Aires Herald, an English-language newspaper.

**MCLAUGHLIN:** New York Press Association "Rookie of the Year"

# The Brooklyn Paper 2009 SUMMER CAMP GUIDE

## Beth Elohim Summer Day Camps

274 Garfield Place, Park Slope, (718) 768-3814, ext. 210, congregationsbethelohim.org

**Elementary Division**

Director: Bobbie Finkelstein

June 30 to Aug 15

Ages: entering K-4

Full day: 9 am-5 pm

Extended hours: 8 am-6 pm

Activities: Swimming (in-structural and recreational), arts and crafts, music, nature, sports, gymnastics, circus arts, trips 2 days per week

**Movin' On Travel Camp**

Director: Bobbie Finkelstein

June 30 through Aug 15

Ages: entering grades 5-9

Full day: 9 am-5 pm

Extended hours: 8 am-6 pm

Activities: Daily trips, swimming, two 3-day overnights,

## Park Explorers

OPEN HOUSE: Saturday, May 17, 10 am-1 pm

611 Eighth Ave., Park Slope, (718) 788-3621, parkexplorers.com

Director: Chris Altman (parkexplorers@yahoo.com)

Ages: 4-14

June 27 to August 29

Full day: 8:30 am-3:30 pm

Extended hours: 'til 6:30 pm

Early drop off: 8 am

**Bus transportation in many**

**brownstone Brooklyn areas**

Activities: No two days are alike! Sports of all kinds, nature walks, hiking, arts and crafts, gymnastics, tennis, drama, karate, singing, trips each week in and around NYC. Special programs in sports and theater for third grade and up.

## Park Slope Day Camp

In Windsor Terrace, Park Slope, Kensington, Bay Ridge, (718) 788-7732, parkslopedaycamp.com, camp@parkslopedaycamp.com

Director: Ronny Schneider

Ages: entering pre-K-9

June 30 to Aug 29

Full day: 8 am-4 pm, early dismissal optional for young kids. Extended to 6:30 pm.

Transportation: Free morning shuttle from most Brownstone Brooklyn and Bay Ridge

Activities: Outdoor camp with sports, trips, gymnastics, drama, nature, Olympics travel camp (featuring overnight trips), leadership program for grades 9 and 10.

Accredited by the American Camp Association

**Brooklyn Friends**

375 Pearl St., Downtown

Brooklyn, (718) 852-1029

Director: Rachel Webber, Ages: 8-12

June 17-July 31

Full day: 9 am-3 pm

Extended: 8:15 am-6 pm

**Kim's Kid's Summer Camp**

PS 321, Seventh Avenue Park Slope, (718) 768-4479

Director: Dan Moinester

Ages: 4-12-11

June 30-Aug 8

Full day: 9 am-4 pm

Extended hours: 8 am-6 pm

Flex weeks and number of days per week available.

Activities: Traveling day camp with lots of physical and outdoors activity. Daily trips, including swimming, (lake, pool and beach), hikes, museums, zoos, playgrounds, NY Aquarium, Liberty Science Center, bowling, climbing, exploring, Sesame Place. Carefully selected adult staff.

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# The Brooklyn Paper PARENT

KIDS • SCHOOL • STYLE • TEENS • CAMPS • MUSIC

## Smartmom: Goddess of Carnage

Last Friday, Smartmom and Hepcat went to see "God of Carnage" at the Broadway hit by Yasmina Reza about two Cobble Hill couples that meet to discuss a playground fight between their sons.

The play has been translated and Brooklynized with references to the Cobble Hill Playground and a San Street Korean market that sells inexpensive Dutch tulips.

And yet there's something universal about parents get-



By Louise Crawford

ting together to discuss and defend the behavior of their children.

Who hasn't been in that situation? When the Oh So Feisty One was in kindergarten,

she got hit by an icy snowball thrown by a classmate in the PS 321 playground. The school nurse called to say that OSFO would probably need stitches on her chin. Smartmom raced over to the school and took a bloody OSFO to the doctor. Smartmom was furious with the aggressive young boy who had caused OSFO so much pain; she fumed the whole car service ride to the doctor's office.

She did, however, manage to soothe OSFO in between fumes.

Turns out, OSFO didn't need stitches just like his Band Aid. Few. That night, Smartmom called the mother of the boy who threw the ice. She told her excruciating detail what her boy had done and how her girl had suffered. But the boy's mom didn't seem to care all that much. Sure, she sounded concerned and clearly she was glad to hear that OSFO was OK. But there were no apologies. No talk of disciplinary action.

Smartmom was miffed. That mom's kid nearly caused OSFO to have stitches, and the mom didn't make that big a deal about it. Smartmom wanted shock and awe (or at least, "Awww"). She wanted the Big Apology. She wanted to remove with a capital R.

Smartmom was slow to forgive — both the boy and the mom. But OSFO moved on quickly. "He has impulse-control issues," OSFO told her. "That's all."

Apparently, playwright Reza actually experienced a situation like the one portrayed in the play, in which



**STREET FIGHT:** Marcia Gay Harden, Hope Davis, Jeff Daniels and James Gandolfini star in the Broadway show, "God of Carnage," which is set in Brooklyn. Smartmom says it accurately depicts her life.

a boy gets hit by another boy and loses two front teeth. Random playground violence, major dental work and stellar acting playing over-determined concerned parents makes for a lot of laughs, physical comedy and over-the-top comic hostility.

At first, the couples are oh so polite. They drink espresso, enjoy the hostess's clafouti, and browse the fancy art books stacked on a stylish coffee table.

But then things get nasty. Very nasty. It's a constantly shifting battle, a nasty square dance. The husbands gang up on the wives and visa versa.

Ultimately, the couples begin to attack one another and the fault lines in each marriage are exposed. The conversation devolves into an adult playground fight between the grown ups are nearly over-manage the kids and spout platitudes about parenting and appropriate behavior.

What the actors expose on the stage is what lies beneath the reality of a playground fight or the possibility of a minor injury.

Smartmom enjoyed "God of Carnage," and it made her think about OSFO's chin in a new way. Now she's glad she didn't pick a big fight with the mother of that ice thrower all those years ago.

One less person to avoid on Seventh Avenue that's for sure.

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## Marty's new potato chip

Here's a first look at the beep's Coney concert hall

By Gersh Kuntzman  
The Brooklyn Paper

Take a bite out of this potato chip, concert fans! Here's a first look at the updated design for Borough President Markowitz's new outdoor amphitheater in Coney Island's Asser Levy Park.

The just-released, potato-chip-infused design for the new outdoor amphitheater in Coney Island's Asser Levy Park. Architects, significantly refined since an earlier version

was leaked in January, adds in some flourishes to make it more fitting with what the city hopes will be a revived amusement zone just to the west.

Markowitz has justified the capital expenditure by saying that the borough needs such a venue to steal some summer-time concert business away from Jones Beach, making Brooklyn "a natural stop on the summer concert circuit for entertainers," Markowitz

told The Brooklyn Paper last year. His own concert series, of course, is one of them. Markowitz hopes "The Chip" will be open by 2011.

Neighbors, however, aren't so sure. Earlier this year, residents of the quieter portion of the neighborhood said Markowitz's dream concert hall would ruin one of the neighborhood's "only open spaces," which is on Surf Avenue near West Fifth Street,

three blocks east of the Cyclone. But according to BD, an architecture trade magazine that broke the story on Thursday morning, 3,000 seats out of the amphitheater's 8,000 overall capacity will be removed when it is used as a park.

The magazine suggested that locals are already calling the project, "The Pringle," because of its shape, but our reporting indicates



**GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT:** Here's a first look at Borough President Markowitz's \$64-million amphitheater for Asser Levy Park in Coney Island.

that people prefer "The Potato Chip." Markowitz could not be reached for further comment owing to the Passover holiday.

## CONEY ISLAND'S LOST SUMMER...

Continued from page 1  
with 10-12 acres of land from Sir's company, Thor Equities. Sitt, at times, has said he wanted to build his own tourist complex on the sandy peninsula. Last week, the city offered Sir \$105 million for his land, but the New York City server reported on Friday that he's asked for \$160 million.

Sitt promises to deliver some temporary help — in a few weeks. His company, which

owns the land where Astroland stood on West 12th Street and many of the storefronts along the Boardwalk and Surf Avenue, announced last week that he's booked 25 rides and carnival attractions to fill the void left by Astroland.

Borough President Markowitz, on hand for the Cyclone reopening, told The Brooklyn Paper that Sir's interim attractions — called "Dreamland Park" like the legendary early 20th-century amusement park

— emboldened him to predict a bustling, lively summer in Coney Island.

"The Astroland lot is not going to be empty," Markowitz said, taking a page from the greatest carnival promoters from Coney's illustrious history. "Coney Island is open, and bigger and better than ever."

Few visitors agreed with Markowitz's P.T. Barnum-like balldoo. "I was confused about what was open," said Neil Hanlon of

Park Slope while she waited for a wait on the Cyclone. "It's smaller than last year, like you could spend half a day here [and do everything]."

Even at Deno's, the atmosphere felt like Davy Crockett at the Alamo. "We're the only amusement park left," lamented Dennis Vourdaris, the owner of the neighborhood's last fun yard. "But we're hanging tough for the community and the city."



Since Astroland closed last year, parts of Coney Island are depressingly empty, even as the Cyclone and Deno's Wonder Wheel opened for the season on Sunday.

## FAMILY CALENDAR



This week, Prospect Park welcomes back the Universal Circus.

### SAT, APRIL 11

10 a.m. Spring Egg Hunt. Free. Pierrepont Playground (Pierrepont Place, between Pierrepont and Montague streets in Brooklyn Heights).

11 a.m. Book swap. Trade in your old kids books and cookbooks. If you swap something, you get a free ticket to the puppet show at 2 p.m. Brooklyn Lagoon (227 Fourth Ave. at President Street in Park Slope, (718) 857-4816, www.brooklynlagoon.com).

11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Crazy Buildings and learn about flowers. Brooklyn Children's Museum (145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant, (718) 735-4400, www.brooklynkids.org).

11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Easter Bunny Books. Brooklyn Children's Museum (145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant, (718) 735-4400, www.brooklynkids.org).

11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Egg fest. Spring-themed activities around the zoo. Prospect Park Zoo (450 Flatbush Ave. at Ocean Avenue in Prospect Park, (718) 399-7339, www.prospectparkzoo.com).

11 a.m. Learn about squirrels. Free. Fort Greene Park Visitor Center (Enter park at Myrtle Avenue and Washington Park in Fort Greene, (718) 723-3218).

Noon, 4 p.m., 7:30 p.m. Universal Soul Circus. African-American-themed circus offers animals, acrobatics and more. c/o 512-520-5011, www.universalsoulcircus.com.

1 p.m. Nature Crafts. Free. Prospect Park Audubon Center (Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue in Prospect Park, (718) 287-3400, www.prospectpark.org/audubon).

1 p.m. Learn about eggs. Prospect Park Audubon Center (see venue info above).

2 p.m. Talking Hands Puppetry. "How the Elephant Got Its Trunk." \$10. Brooklyn Lagoon (227 Fourth Ave. at President Street in Park Slope, (718) 857-4816, www.brooklynlagoon.com).

3:45 p.m. Family Disco Party. Free. Movie Spot (81 Atlantic Ave. between Hicks and Henry streets in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 923-9710, themoviepost.com).

SUN, APRIL 12  
11 a.m.-2 p.m. Easter craft project and scavenger hunt. Free. Movie Spot (81 Atlantic Ave. between Hicks and Henry streets in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 923-9710, themoviepost.com).

11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Learn about flowers and bees. Brooklyn Children's Museum (145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant, (718) 735-4400, www.brooklynkids.org).

11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Egg fest. See Saturday, April 11.

11:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. Easter Bunny Books. Brooklyn Children's Museum (145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant, (718) 735-4400, www.brooklynkids.org).

12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 6:30 p.m. Universal Soul Circus. See Saturday, April 11.

1 p.m. Nature Crafts. See Saturday, April 11.

1 p.m. Learn about eggs. See Saturday, April 11.

6 p.m. BINGO/Board game night. Free. Movie Spot (81 Atlantic Ave. between Hicks and Henry streets in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 923-9710, themoviepost.com).

MON, APRIL 13  
11:30 a.m. Storytime. \$2.50. Movie Spot (81 Atlantic Ave. between Hicks and Henry streets in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 923-9710, themoviepost.com).

Noon-4 p.m. Green Fest. Live music, storytelling, crafts and more. New Aquarium (502 Surf Ave. between W. Eighth and W. Fifth streets in Coney Island, (718) 265-3474, www.nyaquarium.com).

TUES, APRIL 14  
10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Universal Soul Circus. See Saturday, April 11.

11 a.m. Sing Along with Lloyd Miller. \$2.50. Movie Spot (81 Atlantic Ave. between Hicks and Henry streets in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 923-9710, themoviepost.com).

Noon-4 p.m. Green Fest. See Saturday, April 11.

3 p.m. "Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory." \$5. Brooklyn Lagoon (227 Fourth Ave. at President

### STREET IN PARK SLOPE, (718) 857-4816, www.brooklynlagoon.com.

3 p.m. "Be Water Wiser!" Learn about Brooklyn's only lake, conduct experiments and take a waterfall trail tour. Free. Prospect Park Audubon Center (Enter park at Lincoln Road and Ocean Avenue in Prospect Park, (718) 287-3400, www.prospectpark.org/audubon).

3:45 p.m. Dance class for ages 5-7. Free. Vox Pop (1023 Coney Ave. at Coney Island, (718) 940-2054, www.voxpop.net).

WED, APRIL 15  
10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Universal Soul Circus. See Saturday, April 11.

Noon-4 p.m. Green Fest. See Monday, April 13.

1 p.m. Storytime. \$2.50. Movie Spot (81 Atlantic Ave. between Hicks and Henry streets in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 923-9710, themoviepost.com).

THURS, APRIL 16  
10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Universal Soul Circus. See Saturday, April 11.

11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Dance with Nat. \$2.50. Movie Spot (81 Atlantic Ave. between Hicks and Henry streets in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 923-9710, themoviepost.com).

3 p.m. Film, "Shironeko." \$5. Brooklyn Lagoon (227 Fourth Ave. at President Street in Park Slope, (718) 857-4816, www.brooklynlagoon.com).

3 p.m. "Be Water Wiser!" See Tuesday, April 14.

4 p.m. Nintendo Wii Sports Night. Free. Movie Spot (see venue info above).

FRI, APRIL 17  
10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. Universal Soul Circus. See Saturday, April 11.

11:30 a.m. Storytime. \$2.50. Movie Spot (81 Atlantic Ave. between Hicks and Henry streets in Brooklyn Heights, (718) 923-9710, themoviepost.com).

Noon-4 p.m. Green Fest. See Monday, April 13.

6:15 p.m. Family movie night. Free. Movie Spot (see venue info above).

SAT, APRIL 18  
9 a.m.-4 p.m. Earth Day Celebration. Help out in the park and enjoy arts and crafts. Free. Youth Resource Center, Prospect Park Parade Ground (Caton Avenue and Coney Island Avenue in Prospect Park, www.prospectpark.org, and Prospect Park Zoo (450 Flatbush Ave. at Ocean Avenue in Prospect Park, (718) 399-7339, www.prospectparkzoo.com).

Noon-6 p.m. Earth Day Expo. Green crafts, face painting and eco-fashion for children. Recycled art show. Free. Hibana Outpost (757 Fulton St. in Fort Greene, (718) 858-9500, www.ecoartistry.com).

Noon-4 p.m. Green Fest. See Monday, April 13.

Noon, 4 p.m., 7:30 p.m. Universal Soul Circus. See Saturday, April 11.

1 p.m. Nature Crafts. See Saturday, April 11.

1 and 2 p.m. Puppet show, "Two Dinosaurs Are Better Than One." Talking Hands Theatre. Brooklyn Children's Museum (145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant, (718) 735-4400, www.brooklynkids.org).

3 p.m. "Be Water Wiser!" See Tuesday, April 14.

SUN, APRIL 19  
11 a.m.-4 p.m. Earth Day celebrations. See Saturday, April 18.

11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Meet the keepers. Prospect Park Zoo (450 Flatbush Ave. at Ocean Avenue in Prospect Park, (718) 399-7339, www.prospectparkzoo.com).

Noon-6 p.m. Earth Day Expo. See Saturday, April 18.

Noon-4 p.m. Green Fest. See Monday, April 13.

12:30 p.m., 3:30 p.m., 6:30 p.m. Universal Soul Circus. See Saturday, April 11.

1 p.m. Nature Crafts. See Saturday, April 11.

3 p.m. "Be Water Wiser!" See Monday, April 13.

4:7 p.m. Block Party Fundraiser. Eco-friendly activities. \$35-\$100 for family of four. Brooklyn Children's Museum (145 Brooklyn Ave. at St. Marks Avenue in Bedford-Stuyvesant, (718) 735-4400, www.brooklynkids.org).

5 p.m. Earth celebration. Educational materials and family activities about conserving energy. Free. Walt Whitman Theater Plaza (200 Campus Rd. in Flatbush, (718) 951-4500, www.brooklyncenteronline.org).

To list your event, visit BrooklynPaper.com/events/submit



## OUR OPINION

# Let DUMBO thrive

The community board that represents DUMBO voted this week against a city plan to encourage residential development in an area east of the Manhattan Bridge that is currently zoned for manufacturing.

This was utter foolishness by Community Board 2, which has increasingly exhibited an antipathy to residential development in DUMBO.

The city proposal would allow the conversion of warehouses and former factory buildings into much-needed apartments in this still-growing city.

The main sticking point for some residents is the rezoning plan's 12-story height limit on new residential construction.

Their objection, if you can believe it, is that 12 stories is too high.

Too high?

In a neighborhood that has some new buildings and many old warehouses (how beautiful residential and office buildings that are 11, 13 and 16 stories? In a neighborhood that also has a 31-story

**Community Board 2's opposition to a residential rezoning in DUMBO is the latest example of an anti-development stance.**

and a 24-story building next to the proposed rezoning area?

Clearly, the objection to the city's proposed 12-story height limit is a straw man. Indeed, supporters of another controversial DUMBO project — Jed Valenta's Dock Street building — have been

bullied with a false allegation that the project would forever ruin views of the Brooklyn Bridge.

Are there reasonable issues to raise in both cases? Of course.

But a reasoned debate is impossible when one side only wants to punish developers for the "crime" of wanting to profit from the city's insatiable need for

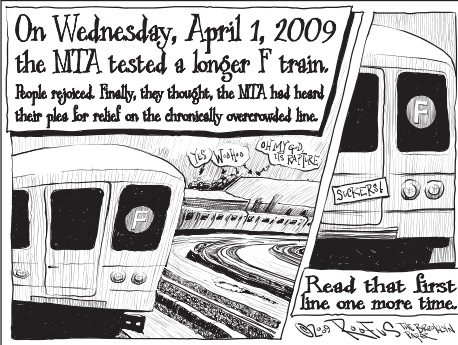
housing in desirable neighborhoods near Manhattan.

It's important to note that if the proposed DUMBO Historic District goes through as expected, virtually all of the rezoned area would be protected as a city landmark — so any new construction would have to conform to the neighborhood's unique character.

It is true that some of DUMBO's earliest residents — artists who fled Manhattan and turned the neighborhood into a forgotten warehouse district into one of the most desirable places to live and work — could be displaced if real-estate prices soar. But is this not the story of New York?

For DUMBO, or any neighborhood, to thrive, it needs to be allowed to adapt to ever-changing circumstances. People want to live in DUMBO, developers want to build them homes, and the city wants to cap the height of the buildings — and maintain DUMBO's historic flavor. It sounds good to us.

## ALL DRAWN OUT



## LETTERS

# Dead trees Bloomy's fault

To the editor,

Your story about the arboricide caused by the New York City Waterfalls exhibit ("Silent spring" — It's official: W'talks waterfalls when it's official," April 4) should have made a least some reference to Mayor Bloomberg, who diverted \$2 million to a \$11 disaster recovery money for its funding.

He led and directed almost all the \$15-12 million in funding for it and then gave his pet project a (self-congratulatory) city award notwithstanding the damage it did.

It was probably because of Bloomberg's involvement that there was no environmental impact statement or assessment ahead of time sufficient to identify the damage that was likely.

In addition to the diverted disaster recovery money, funding came from Bloomberg's private "charity" and from a City Hall "charity" that Bloomberg controls by being mayor and then from a long list of mostly real-estate industry interests, like Atlantic Yards developer Forest City Ratner, all of whom

who benefit terribly from discretionary decisions made by the Bloomberg administration.

The kicker is that the recipient of all this money, Susan Freedman, president of the Public Art Fund, testified in support of the Bloomberg-proposed special extension of term limits.

**Michael D. D. White,**

**Brooklyn Heights**

## Two way? No way!

To the editor,

Your recent article about a proposal for two-way traffic on Eighth Avenue and Prospect Park West ("Eight Avenue and Prospect Park West should go both ways," online, March 25) indicated that the Park Slope Civic Council was basing its support for the plan on a community survey.

Additionally, Eric McClure and the group, Park Slope Neighbors, are circulating a petition in support of this proposal.

As a member of the Civic Council, I would

have been happy to complete the community survey, but it was never circulated to me, and I do wonder how they chose their recipients.

As a 30-year resident of Prospect Park West, I am strongly opposed to the idea of two-way traffic. There is a traffic light every two blocks and one way to calm traffic (which, I agree, goes too fast) would be to change the timing of these lights.

The 78th Precinct used to do an excellent job of issuing speeding tickets.

I have done my own informal poll of neighbors on Prospect Park West and on several park blocks, and they have also been opposed to this proposal.

If there were one lane of traffic in two directions, there would be many drivers making illegal U-turns (as they do on Seventh Avenue), and pulling into the oncoming lane to overtake slower cars.

There are children constantly crossing Prospect Park West for access to the park and two-way traffic would create a very dangerous situation.

I would hate to think that because of their very inclusive names — "Park Slope Civic Council" and "Park Slope Neighbors" — that city agencies and elected officials might think that they automatically represent a majority of the Park Slope residents.

I very much hope that there will be public hearings where we will all have the opportunity to express our views.

**Jasmine Melzer, Park Slope**

## Send a letter

By e-mail: Letters@BrooklynPaper.com

By mail: Letters, The Brooklyn Paper, 55 Washington St., Brooklyn, NY 11201.

All letters must be signed and include the writer's home address and phone number (only the writer's name and neighborhood are published with the letter). Letters may be edited and will not be returned. The earlier in the week you send your letter, the better.

## WEB CHATTER

# Dock Street project caught in our web

Readers remain extremely passionate about our most recent story about Jed Valenta's Two Trees Management's Dock Street project in DUMBO ("McCloughlin's view: Dock Street Great Bridge," April 4), which reported how renowned historian David McCloughlin opposes the project on the grounds that it would adversely hinder views of the Brooklyn Bridge. We've received some letters, but the most heated (though typically anonymous) exchanges are taking place in our online edition. Here are some of the highlights.

Bravo Mr. McCloughlin, bravo. Help bring some sanity back and respect for our history and monuments.

**Sanity from DUMBO**

...

1) Pratt Institute has come out in support of this project because Valenta sits on the Board of Pratt and has donated a considerable sum to the school.

2) Christine Quinn, a major player in the decision-making process over this project, and her affiliated campaign and fund raising groups have taken in over \$125,000 in contributions from Two Trees, its principals, employees, attorneys and others closely affiliated with the developer.

3) Councilwoman Melinda Katz, chair of the Land-Use Committee, has appointed the developer to her campaign finance committee.

4) Two Trees and its principals have spent nearly \$500,000 in lobbying fees over the past two years.

5) The zoning sub-committee of Community Board 2 voted against this project and recommended by a vote of 10-1 to limit the height of any structure on this site to no higher than the Brooklyn Bridge roadway.

6) A petition of nearly 11,000 signatures reinforces the belief that any structure on this site should be limited in height to no higher than the Brooklyn Bridge roadway.

7) At Borough President Markowitz's public hearing, 72 out of 100 people who testified were against this project.

**Let the Truth be Told from DUMBO**

...

So sad how this nice old man has been snookered into being associated with this folly. This is a modest project by New York standards which impacts the bridge zero percent — except for the rich condo owners who have perpetrated this fraud.

Truly sad how this serious decision-making process has become a circus.

**Davoyager from Brooklyn Heights**

...

Davoyager: David McCloughlin is a respected, Pulitzer Prize-winning historian, especially knowledgeable regarding the Brooklyn Bridge, and he's been involved with preserving the bridge for decades.

Your condescending arrogance is outrageous and flat out wrong.

Your ageism disgraces and further discredits you. This "nice old man" who you say "has been snookered," has more intelligence and standing in his pinky than you have in your entire pony-tailed head.

The only people being snookered here are the patsies like you who, without getting anything in writing, actually believe Two Trees will honor its promises if it gets its zoning change.

**Publius from Brooklyn Heights**

...

I'm sure McCloughlin is more than qualified to take his position, but let's not forget he's a businessman, too. Certainly he's already made a fortune from "The Great Bridge."

Get the school in writing and take it down a floor. It's not that bad.

**Carlo Trigliani from Brooklyn Heights**

# BOXED...

Continued from page 1

that his facility has permission from the city to park on several sidewalk spaces along Narrows Avenue because the school actually owns the land.

An employee at one of the other purported offenders — Fourth Avenue's Life Quality BMW dealership — admitted that cars have been parked on sidewalk.

"There is a possibility that it has happened, but [the cars] don't stay there for long," said the employee.

But for Ryan — who is urging the city to ramp up enforcement against sidewalk parking — any amount of time is too long.

"It's illegal for cars to park on any sidewalk — no matter what," said Ryan.

# BYRNE...

Continued from page 1

the park's much-loved landscape."

But Byrne isn't the summer's only big benefit show. Tickets are still available for Rock and Roll Hall of Famer Jackson Browne's July 21 concert as well as the experimental indie act Animal Collective's Aug. 14 and 15 shows, but the Brooklyn-based electro-poppers MGMT's July 31 show has already sold out.

The season's full lineup of free shows will be released on May 4.

Last year, folk god Bob Dylan played Prospect Park in a "Celebrate Brooklyn!" benefit — but there were no free seats that time.

David Byrne at the Prospect Park band shell (enter park at Prospect Park West and Ninth Street), June 8, 8 p.m. Gala tickets, \$325; general admission, free (\$3 suggested donation). For information, visit [www.brooklynline.org](http://www.brooklynline.org).

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# Test train in vain

## MTA assesses longer train, then cans it

By Aisha Gawad  
The Brooklyn Paper

Reports of the Train's improvement were, alas, greatly exaggerated.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority sent shockwaves through Brownstone Brooklyn last Wednesday night when it tested an 11-car train along the perpetually packed Culver Line.

Two days later, the transit agency told The Brooklyn Paper that it actually can't afford to roll out the longer train.

"I doubt if we're ever going to [add the 11th car] in light of the current budgetary crisis," said MTA spokesman James Anyasi. "The F line is pretty choked up — it's at full capacity — so adding an

extra car might be a good solution, but I wouldn't expect [it] right now."

That dashed the hopes of, well, virtually everyone who has stepped in that saddle can with the orange logo during rush hour. Just adding one car to the normal, 10-car train could increase capacity by 10 percent at rush hour, said Gary Reilly, a F-line advocate and Council candidate for the Windsor Terrace-Park Slope seat being vacated by Councilman Bill DeBlasio.

The difficulties are not just financial: Part of the purpose of the MTA's test run was to figure out which platforms can accommodate an 11-car train.

"Some platforms are longer than others [so] it would probably just run on express stops," said Anyasi.

That concerned Reilly. "The older platforms at stations south of Church Avenue might not be long enough to fit the 11-car train," he said.

Riders, of course, love the idea of an extra car — after all, they hate the current system, which includes



Here's some file art of a 10-car F train. Only the snow has changed.

tardy trains and the threat of a fare hike.

"I'd rather see more frequency for the F train," said Kerri O'Brien. "I'd rather crowd into one car than wait."

David Kallis, who said he has been riding the F train

for 40 years, also said "the frequency is not enough."

"The F train is always crowded," he added. "There used to be a local and an express on the neighboring track. They eliminated it many years ago and never restored it."

Then as now, of course, the main problem remains cost. Adding one car does require more power, as well as extra maintenance and cleaning costs — not something the cash-strapped agency wants right now, Anyasi said.

— with Roland Li

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## Voters to pols: Dazzle us!

By Mike McLaughlin  
The Brooklyn Paper

It's time for the five candidates to succeed Councilman Bill DeBlasio to put aside the talking points and dazzle us already.

That's at least the premise of the "Dazzle Me" forum being hosted on April 25 by Carroll Gardens Coalition to Respectfully Develop, a neighborhood group.

The stated goal of the group is to get the candidates for the Democratic nomination — John Heyer, Bob Zuckerman, Josh Skaller, Brad Lander, and Gary Reilly — to not only break out from the pack, but to do so with something truly valuable to voters.

"I hope it doesn't become 'dazzle us' with how marketable you are," said Rita Miller, a member of the group.

Residents are invited to submit questions beforehand.

"We really wanted to make this an interview for a job and take it back to the level that we are looking to hire someone to represent us. These are prospective employees. They're going to have to dazzle us with their talents."

There's no reason why the candidates can't rise to the occasion. After all, their resumes are brimming with experience — Heyer works for Borough President Markowitz, Zuckerman just took a leave of absence from running the Gowanus Canal Conservancy, Skaller is a Democratic club member.

Lander is the director of the Pratt Center for Community Development, and Reilly is a member of the Carroll Gardens Neighborhood Association.

But can they "dazzle"?

After a laugh or two about trying to electrify the electorate with flashy costumes and their juggling skills, the podiumed their sales pitch on The Brooklyn Paper.

Reilly, an amateur expert on the MTA, especially the F train which cuts through the district like the carotid artery, said, "I'm going to talk about improving mass transit, including his support for tolls on the East River bridges (yeah, that'll dazzle 'em!)."

Zuckerman said he'd dazzle with his concern about zoning!

"In Carroll Gardens, people are very interested in the down zoning and that's something I fully support," he said.

There are also a number of people who believe that the historic district should be expanded beyond the two

**http://**

Voters want to be dazzled — but who excited our current office-seekers? Find out at **BrooklynPaper.com**

blocks that it currently is and I'm a proponent of that."

Lander, the one who initially made the joke about working on his soft-shoe act, rattled off the hot-button issues in Carroll Gardens that he wants to tackle.

"They've had a lot of overdevelopment," he said. "There's a lot of attention in this neighborhood on the Gowanus Canal and the closing of mom and pop shops. This neighborhood loves its mom and pops."

He has a back-up plan if that doesn't impress the audience.

"If necessary, I may resort to juggling and tap dancing."

Skaller said he was going to focus on issues of government transparency and reform.

"We're speaking very strongly for budget reform. We need to see where the money is coming from and going to," he said.

Ah, the money. That issue flared in this district recently when former Councilman Steve DiBrienza had to abort his attempt to return to office after The Brooklyn Paper reported that he had his former colleagues in the Council funded \$1.2 million to a nonprofit that spent the vast majority of it on salaries.

The "Dazzle Me Forum" will be Saturday, April 25 at the Carroll Gardens branch of the Brooklyn Public Library 396 Clinton St. at Union Street. (947) 661-8919 or cgcdd@bmail.com, 10:30 am.

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Continued from page 1

nector" — which would cost between \$8 and \$10 million, and could qualify for federal stimulus dollars.

"The top of the berm is not high enough to really block the noise, and in the places where the berm will be interrupted by buildings, sound will come in," added Rattner, who claims that his proposal would reduce current BQE noise from 85 decibels to 65 decibels — five decibels quieter than the reported noise-stopping berms.

The Joralemon Street resident also claims that his threatened tunnel — which would be layered on the inside with sound-absorbing materials, and on the outside with glow-in-the-dark photovoltaic cells — would allow for better views from the Promenade and more light to reach Furman Street.

But whether the project is totally tubular or just a case of tunnel vision is up to the State Department of Transportation, which has promised to repair the triple cantilever between Atlantic Avenue and the Brooklyn Bridge without affecting the Brooklyn Bridge Park development.

The agency will have a chance to examine how the "Brooklyn Bridge Connector" fits in with its difficult renovation project when the public scoping process begins in the next two months.

"During that time, we will welcome any suggestions from the community and any other interested parties that may produce mutual benefits for the users of the roadway and the users of the park," said spokesman Adam Levine. "I cannot comment on a specific suggestion [now]."

Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy Acting Executive Director Nancy Webster said that she was eager to hear about sound-stifling proposals — but she disagreed with the calls to eliminate the berms.

"The berms provide more than sound attenuation," she said. "They also will enhance the park experience by adding visual and topographical interest to the site, providing a variety of pathways and plantings, particularly shade trees, that will help provide protection from wind and sun."

The proposed tunnel is just one more twist in the ever-tumultuous Brooklyn Bridge Park development, where ballooning costs and questions of funding have put the project's future in jeopardy.

The "Brooklyn Bridge Connector" proposal can be seen at [www.brooklyn-bridgeconnector.net](http://www.brooklyn-bridgeconnector.net) — but visitors should turn down their computer speakers before surfing to the Web site, which features a loud sound loop of actual BQE noise (no, really).

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